

# The Beat Within



THE BEAT WITHIN • A WEEKLY PUBLICATION OF WRITING AND ART FROM THE PEOPLE • VOLUME 14.10



Hello wonderful Beat writers, readers and fans. Once again, as we do every week, we're bringing you this knock-out publication of writing from the warehoused in juvenile halls and beyond, and once again, we are so proud to be associated with this unique publication. Each week we type and respond to our young writers who fill our pages, sometimes with childish dreams of riches — dreams that require ignoring the circumstances in which they write; sometimes with unaccustomed thoughts that reveal a mind in transition from childhood to adulthood; and sometimes with profound depth of insight and knowledge that make us shake our heads in wonder at the amount of human talent that is so easy to overlook. Even after more than thirteen years of weekly Beats, we are still blown away by what you produce every single week. The Beat Within is truly a treasure.

So, what would your lives be like without this treasure? We want all of our Beat family to think about that question. What would your world be like without The Beat? We're not on the verge of collapse, so don't panic, but the economic disaster our country (and world) are confronting right now does affect The Beat. (The economic collapse we are facing comes from our crushingly expensive wars in Iraq and Afghanistan; some of you deeper thinkers will be able to see a connection between the devastating effects these wars have had on our economy, and the devastating effects the street wars have had on your lives...)

Like other non-profit organizations, we need to face this economic downturn and make some changes, if we are to thrive. If we don't make these changes, we could lose the whole project, which is why we asked you to consider what your world would be like if you didn't have The Beat in it. We know what our world would be like — gray, ordinary, unexciting. We'd have to go back to 9 to 5 jobs (if we could find any), and it would be like climbing down off a mountaintop and having to adjust to life at the bottom. We would hate it!

We have already gone over with you some of the changes we plan to make in order to continue publishing The Beat. But it never hurts to drive the point home, because things aren't getting better out there, and this is nothing we have any control over. Either we make some changes, or we will be crushed. The Beat's biggest expense is in the amount of paper we use to print enough issues to give to all our writers, plus anyone who asks for a subscription. But cutting down on that mailing, we can save a substantial amount of money, so that's our first economy. We will, of course, continue giving out Beats in the workshops for all who write something that's serious enough to be in The Beat, but we will not be sending Beats out in the mail any more, except for those (mostly prisoners) who write a piece for publication, and want to see the issue it was printed in.

It may be that the hardest part for our workshop writers is the phrase, "write something that's serious enough to be in The Beat." Until now, we have been very generous with what we publish. Although we work long hours putting this magazine out each week, we've noticed a large number of Beat writers who put in almost no effort or thought or time into what they write. Instead, they just put down a few sentences so that they can get The Beat to take to their rooms. That kind of writing is now a thing of the past, at least as far as being published in The Beat is concerned. We will not publish any more two- or three-sentence pieces because there's no way you can say anything worthwhile in just three sentences. But even if you write more than three sentences, you will still have to spit some knowledge, say something serious, be thoughtful, to be in The Beat. We have seen so many pieces that require no thought on your part, pieces that usually begin, "I want outta here so I can go back to the block and do me..." Yes, we know you want out of here, but that kind of statement teaches nothing, and The Beat is about teaching something. So you writers who have relied on a lazy line or two that tells us what we already know, you will find your pieces missing from The Beat. Of course, the kind of pieces that were never appropriate — love letters, threats, graphic descriptions of violence that you try to justify, hate pieces, and pieces holding your set or 'hood up — are still not appropriate, and we'll probably be even stricter on keeping those kinds of pieces out of The Beat.

While we're trying to trim the budget at one end, we're also trying to increase our income at the other end. We have been meeting with various people in the community about how to increase The Beat's visibility, how to reach out to individual donors as well as foundations which give money to non-profits like The Beat, people who believe in what we (you) are doing and want to support it. We are developing a number of public events to expose The Beat to new people and groups, and, of course, we are extending The Beat's program to places like New Mexico, Arizona, Monterey, Fresno, Washington, DC, and now Miami, Florida, while responding to requests we get each week to see about bringing The Beat to other counties and states. (If any of you fans of The

Beat know of individuals or organizations that you think might be interested in contributing to our future, we would love to know who they are...)

We don't want to discourage any of you. But we have to be honest with this kind of warning; we have no choice. We have to increase our efforts both to trim our budget and to add to it in order to keep The Beat alive. Far from discouraging you, we hope this inspires you to step up big and deliver those doubles, triples and home runs that fill every issue of The Beat, and which the many fans of your writing have come to expect. Here are a few of the diamond-brilliant gems in this issue you hold in your hand:

"If the PO, DA or judge could live in the conditions we do they would realize that this is not a 'rehabilitation process' as they like to call it. Have them spend around 16 hours in their room, eat when people tell you to, wake up to ice water showers, and not have people listen to what you have to say." (Ballard, SF).

"At least in this place I can escape the madness  
The sun shines bright, here I have no sadness  
I was a kid who was hurt physically and emotionally  
The pain is like a disease that will stay in me permanently  
When I awake from sleeping, the walls close in  
Reality hit home, I lived a life filled with sin"  
(Chango, Santa Clara)

"I've decided to stop doing drugs and running the streets so I can focus on my schoolwork, which I really want to do so I can have a chance at getting my diploma. I've become more dedicated to my schoolwork in these past few months. I took my exit exam, and I think that I did a good enough job to pass. I tried my best."  
(Donald, SF)

"I have to give up a lot in this world  
but it's a sacrifice that I need to succeed in life.  
I'm going to do this for me and my family,  
the people that I love and need in this world.  
What I need is what I'm going to achieve."  
(Lil' Joker, Alameda)

We could have chosen dozens of other examples, but you get the point. Without The Beat, our world would be so much poorer, and we believe your world would be too. So we need all of you to do your part. Writers, step up and take The Beat seriously so you can teach and we can publish what you teach. Readers, step up and take The Beat seriously so that you can introduce us to potential funders, both individuals or organizations.

While you're thinking of what you might do to help us, these are the topics in this issue that have produced such outstanding writing:

The first topic is "Sacrificing for my future" What do you think you have to give up to change your future, to make it better? What's keeping you from making that sacrifice? When you think of the sacrifices your mom or grandmother have made for you, does it make you want to sacrifice anything for them? What have they given up for you? What are you willing to give up for them?

Topic #2 is, "Can the rich put themselves in the shoes of the poor?" Last week, a news reporter began a month experiment to live on food stamps, trying to learn what over 30 million poor Americans experience, having to live on only \$6.28 a day. Do you think he will have a better understanding of what life is like for those who have to struggle to put food on the table? If DAs, POs, PDs or judges had to spend a little time in lock-up, do you think it would make them less likely to put young people there? Can "rich" people learn about the experiences of the "poor" by putting themselves in their shoes? What would they learn?

The last topic is, "Lucky or unlucky." Do you consider yourself lucky or unlucky? How do you define both those words? Have you been lucky in some situations but unlucky in others? Do people bring their own good or bad luck, or does it just happen that way? Who's the luckiest person you've ever met, and what's the luckiest thing that ever happened to you? Who's the unluckiest person you've ever met, and what's the unluckiest thing that ever happened to you?

Okay, good people. This issue goes out to all of you taking that extra step to put

The Beat on a secure financial footing. As long as there are juvenile halls, The Beat wants to be there to capture the talent that is so casually thrown away. As Abraham Lincoln said, "We — even we here now — hold the power and bear the responsibility."



**The Beat Within**, a weekly newsletter of writing and art by incarcerated youth, is published by Pacific News Service.

At The Beat Within, we go through a lot of trouble to censor inappropriate sexual remarks, foul language, and gang references. There is enough tension in our communities already—we don't aim to bolster it. It is in The Beat's interest to promote peace and unity. Our goal is to educate one another.

The Beat Within publishes the opinions and views expressed by the participants in our workshops. This is simply the pure voice of the youth. The views you read do not necessarily reflect those of the publisher, editor, or staff. All rights are reserved. Nothing from this publication can be reproduced without our written permission.

**To our writers:** What you write could be hazardous to you. Your words have consequences, and could be used to incriminate you. Try to illuminate your feelings and viewpoints without running the risk of providing ammunition for those who might use your words against you.

**Co-Founders:** Sandy Chase and David Incecio

**Senior Editors:** David Incecio

**Assistant Editors:** Michael Krill, Omar Turcios

**Graphics/Layout Editor:** Mencia Phu

**Staff:** Pauline Craig, Carolyn Gosses, Jill Wolfson, Allan Martinez, Patricia Johnson, Amanda Ables, Dennis Martin, Sheerly Avni, Hanif Poy, Brenda Navarro, Samantha Navarro, Johnny Lee, Laura Vitano, Karly Serrano, Ricky Collins, Kendra Davis, Anastasia Freeman, Lemarius Brown, Mon'Kesia Butler, Michaela, Ava, Danyal, Jeanette Saltrian, Monica Carls, Janet Light, Allen Tinker, Nic Keiner-Parr, Laura Goode, Molly Patterson, Terry Simmons, Kirstin Dan, Anelkyone, Silvia Mortens, Kelly Hanson, Sam Petersen, Kim Nelson, Gwendolyn Hubner, Oscar Peña Jr., Julia Scheinbaum, and Neela Panerjee.

**The Maricopa County, Phoenix, Arizona, Juvenile Probation Department Beat**

**Staff:** Joe Szukewski, M.A., Lisa Donsker, M.C., Hillary Shluker, M.C., Lisa Karczewski, M.A. The detention staff are: Carissa Allen, Antoinette Flores, Mr. B., Temmie Uiter, Dr. Scott Herrmann, Connie Tyburn, Ph.D. Clinical Director, Ph.D. Clinical Director.

**Bernalillo County Juvenile Detention & Youth Services Center Beat Staff:** Steve Serna

**Oak Hill - Washington, DC Staff:** Alex Moe and Gabriel Pender

**Fresno:** Mai Lor Vang, Rosie Wentz, Liliana Romero, Nicol Medhurst, Ashleigh Koecker, and Cindy Jensen

**JDS - Dade County, Miami, Florida:** Edward Ahmed

**Monterey:** Sam Petersen and Sarah Damico

**Art:** Much props to everyone for the great art this week.

**Spiritual Advisor:** Jack Jacques

**Special Volunteer:** Nancy DeMartini

**Book Donor:** Marisela Nieto

**Beat Supporters:** The Beat Within gratefully acknowledges the generous support of funders of Pacific News Service's Youth Communications Programs - California Arts Council, California Wellness Foundation, Christensen Fund, Community Foundation of Silicon Valley, Community Technology Foundation of California, Computer Foundation, Creative Work Fund, Cricket Island Foundation, Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund, Ford Foundation, James Irvine Foundation, Marguerite Casey Foundation, Maria Community Foundation, Morris Stulso Foundation, Nathan Cummings Foundation, Oakland Fund for Children and Youth, Open Society Institute, Peninsula Community Foundation, Philanthropic Ventures Foundation, S. H. C. Well Foundation, Monterey, Fresno, Solano, Oak Hill - Washington, ICSan Francisco, Arts Commission, San Francisco Foundation, Shingayson Foundation, W. Clement and Jessie V. Stone Foundation, Stone Circles Foundation, Stuart Foundation, Sordina Foundation, The California Endowment, Ticks Foundation, Var Loren Schol/Kam's Rock Foundation, Vanguard Public Foundation, Wallace Alexander Garbade Foundation, Walter S. Johnson Foundation, Youth Justice Funding Collaborative, the Zellerbach Family Fund and individual donors.

**Writers:** Thanks to all the participants in our workshops in the San Francisco, Maricopa County, Arizona, Santa Clara, San Mateo, Alameda, Perisillia County, New Mexico, Santa Cruz and Marin County Juvenile Halls. If you have any questions or comments about The Beat Within, or if you would like to become a subscriber, contact us at 275 Ninth St. SECA 94133 or call (415) 93-417 or check us out at:

**Editor's Note** 2

**Miami, Florida** 4

**Land of Enchantment** 8

**Oak Hill** 10

**Pieces Of The Week** 11

**Co-Pieces Of The Week** 16

**Standouts** 23

<i>Alameda</i> .....	23
<i>San Francisco</i> .....	31
<i>Santa Clara</i> .....	35
<i>Santa Cruz</i> .....	46
<i>Marin</i> .....	48
<i>Fresno</i> .....	49
<i>Solano</i> .....	54
<i>Voices In Spanish</i> .....	56

**The Beat Without** 60





## Like MLK

I've been locked behind cells  
trying my hardest to get out of here.  
My mind is taking over, I'm about to explode.  
I got to let y'all hear what I'm carrying in my load.  
I been riding on the same road since I was young  
but now I think it's time for a change.  
I want to be like Martin Luther King  
And I don't want nobody judging me.  
I used to live my life on these streets,  
y'all criminals use to be just like me.  
Yes violence is taking over these streets,  
young people hear now and listen to my speech:  
I use to be committed to crime but now  
I'm committed to these cells.  
I'm trying to make it better while I'm in here.

-Baby Boy

**From The Beat:** We're glad you've taken the opportunity to get things off your chest, and in a very effective way. If you were to continue this message, what other similarities do you want to share with MLK?

## Jam Up

Being jammed up in DJJ. When you're back to your room, just pray to get out the next day. Then you look up at your wall and think "Is that all? All this that I'm doing, is it hurting my family or friends?" You look out a little hole out the window, look up at the dark skies then tears start to come down. You're teary eyed and you're like, "damn, I'm jammed for petty stuff." Then you say "I'm not doing the crimes 'cause I can't do the time."

-J-Zoe

**From The Beat:** You've drawn a great comparison between the freedom you hope for and the reality of being in detention. Seeing the sky from a little hole is not satisfying, and it's an image that all of us should carry with us in the future.

## Bad Times

RIP to my dogs that are gone. You was balling when you were here and you still balling while gone. A boy still going through hard times but now that you gone, know that a boy done stop doing all these bad crimes.

When the time comes for me to take the throne you best believe I'm going to take it straight home. I can't say I'm ever going to change.

I never use to be a goon. I use to be a smart book-addicted kid that stayed in school.

-Baby Boy

**From The Beat:** Baby Boy, does saying goodbye give you the freedom to get back to the books...to find that lost part of yourself that you begin to speak about here? If so, saying goodbye may allow you to say hello to something hopeful.

## The Beat Within

Today I just joined a group called The Beat Within. I really like it, it's okay. I'm gonna really keep trying so I can stay in this group.

Yesterday we just got a new black president and we made history 'cause he's black. I think he is really gonna change the world for not only black people, but for everyone in this country. And he's really gonna make a change for the world. He's gonna make prices go up on people's pay.

-Shayon

**From The Beat:** Welcome, Shayon! We hope you stick with this and continue to develop your writing. It seems that you have hopes for Obama and what he'll do for this country. Maybe you should consider writing him at some point.

**From The Beat:** We welcome these incredible SUBMISSIONS FROM MIAMI DADE REGIONAL JUVENILE DETENTION CENTER, in MIAMI DADE COUNTY, Florida. A big thank you to you writers and to our wonderful friend and colleague, Miami Eddy aka Eddy Ameen.

## The Outside World

I'm wild on the outside but deep down I'm clod. I done had my chance to walk through the hospital doors. The machine once used to be strapped to my chest and here now I law with a bullet-proof vest. I want to be able to treat my child with much respect.

Man can change the world but he can't change me. I done reach the end. DJJ - that's where all my problems had begun. Once you come once, you best believe that you're gonna come twice. This is my change to a better life. This is where I start my life all over again.

-Baby Boy

**From The Beat:** You really show a metamorphosis with this piece. If it's true that detention repeats itself, what can you do to break this cycle? You sound convinced that you're going to change. We'd like you to tell readers what that change means so you can inspire others!



## My Grandmother's My Mother

To me, my grandma is my mother. Under God, the person who gives birth is your mother. But what about if she was never there? What if she left you in the hands of your father, a cruel and malicious man? "Is she still your mother?" Not to me...

To me the person who raises you is your mother, the person who teaches you right from wrong, the person who will be there for you no matter what. Good, bad, right, or wrong, your mother will never turn her back. You can life, cheat, or steal and your mother will love you no matter what. That's why to me, my grandmother is my mother. No matter what I've done in my life, she's always stands by my side. From birth till the end of time, she tells me she will be there.. The bond we share, the love we have surpasses any other. That's why to me my grandmother's my mother. Forever. And ever. Dedicated to my abuelita, Regina.

-Remek

**From The Beat:** This is a heartfelt piece. You clearly express how fortunate you are to have a relationship like you do with your grandma. For many, family is how you define it.

## Just Me

Just before I went to sleep last night,  
I thought about who I used to be.  
And the life I lived.  
What I thought then to be right,  
I know now to be wrong.  
All the nights in the street,  
Posted up smoking reef.  
I put my family through grief,  
I let them down, like the Cardinals,  
Who suffered defeat.  
But who can I blame?  
Nobody but me.

**-Remek**

**From The Beat:** Taking stock of your life like this is not easy because you have to accept that you've hurt those you care about - yourself and your family included. But acceptance also means that you can move forward, playing a new ball game...You go first and maybe the Cardinals will follow!

## Vibin' On That Beat

I'm vibin' to the beat with the lady.  
I'm just vibin' to the beat with my baby.  
Vibin' to the beat. I'm vibin, no stoppin.  
People be jokin' my vibe while I'm on the street  
Just bopping, move to the beat.  
Every day of the week  
Ya could catch me vibin' on that beat.

**-Joselin**

**From The Beat:** Joselin, this has got great rhythm and a good break from the stress that many readers face every day. Let's all vibe to the beat (no pun intended).

## On My Mind

I got a lot going through my mind, especially court. I cannot stop thinking about it. I don't have any idea what's going to happen. I'm very nervous.

My public defender has not come to talk to me. I just can't wait till she comes to speak to me - I have so many things to tell her. I tried calling her but I just can't get in contact. I'm really frustrated because of that. Hopefully she'll come talk to me this week, and I'll feel better. I need to tell her the facts of my case so that she will fight for me in court and let them know what happened.

I hope the judge will let me go home and I will be a happy kid again. Then I can go home and deal with my family problems.

**-Chucky**

**From The Beat:** You've got a LOT on your mind and show how hard it can be to never reach your lawyer. Hopefully through writing this piece, you were able to transfer some of that frustration from your head to the page, and leave it there.

## What's On My Mind

What's on my mind is: Can my grandma see me or not. 'Cause when I talked to her the other day, she said she was very sick. She said she was very, very sick. But she's been sick since I was 12 and now I'm 16 and she's still sick. But she's been trying to get herself fixed for the longest. So right now she's in a wheelchair everywhere she goes, but that's just one thing that goes on in my mind.

**-Jv**

**From The Beat:** Thanks for sharing a little bit of you and putting into words your concerns about your grandma. It is tough to see a loved one get sick. We hope she is able to visit you - it sounds like it would mean a whole lot!

## Joke

Joke of life.  
People show ways of joking.  
People treat things as a joke.  
So why don't the world do a joke?  
Because jokes are evol (evil) and evol spelled backward is love.  
So what's love...evol.  
So evol is a sin but love would always be there.

**-Mail**

**From The Beat:** You did a nice play on words here, and show what a good thing it can be to turn things around, literally and symbolically. Let there be love, but not evil/evol. If you're up for it, please share your thoughts on good jokes and humor, if you think that exists.

## Why?

I ask myself why.  
Why do I feel all this pain?  
Why did I take that day as a game?  
Why have I brought all of this shame upon my family name?  
The family and the glory --  
It's not worth it to hurry.  
Thru the fog and clouds,  
I ask myself out loud, why?  
The money means nothing  
Compared to my freedom.  
All I hear from the judge  
Is "boy, you're done."  
Funny thing is, I didn't even use a gun,  
Just walking down the street looking up at the sun.  
I get rushed, beaten, and jumped -  
I run to my home and ask myself why?  
So I call up my friends and tell them the story  
They come to my house as quick as a flurry,  
We decide to walk back to the scene  
With anger on my mind, I decide to be seen.  
See a blade on the counter, I decide to be keen.  
I come through the shadows, not to be seen.  
We begin to fight, he pulls out a knife  
And he's aware that I'm only seventeen.  
He makes a move but he's quick to lose  
My blade is no longer clean.  
I turn around and see my friends,  
both bleeding like the blood won't end.  
I pick them up and begin to run  
This madness has just begun.  
They're both in pain, I don't feel the same.  
And then I ask why?  
Why did this just happen?  
Why did I just do what I did?  
I dirtied my life, in a simple act of rage.  
Next thing I know, I'm surrounded by red lights  
And I knew my life would never be the same.  
Now I sit here in my cell, seven months of this cold hell.  
And it's my first offense.  
They gave me a plea, to which I agreed  
And now I have to be among criminals that compare  
nothing to me.  
I know now that life ain't fair.  
But still I keep that hope in me.  
Why?  
So the world can see that time will never, ever break me.

**-Remek**

**From The Beat:** Thank you for giving the readers a play-by-play of that fateful day. We know that for many in your shoes, it repeats like a tape that's stuck in the VCR. Is there another way you can move the tape forward to the next chapter?

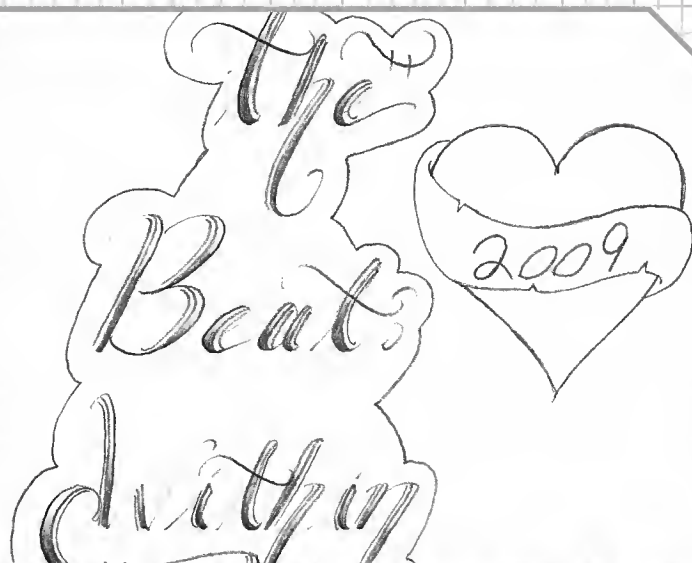


## Death

Death is a cruel think and it hurts people's hearts.  
It's easy to say but hard to tell.  
If I don't get out of jail, I'm gonna raise hell.

**-BlackBoy**

**From The Beat: We hope you do get out and live life! Keep writing and expanding your thoughts through words, you're on to something!**



## Loved

Couldn't find that four letter word until I approached u.  
Couldn't find a reason for L.O.V.E. until you gave it a purpose.

You console me, you bring me closure when you touch and hold me.

My misses never temped to leave me lonely.

Your silent whispers sooth my body.

If I kiss her, will she feel the magic? Ecstatic.

Her body shivers in pleasure when I deliver.

Not lust – more than a crush. But this is pure passion.

When you cry I'm quick to clear your weary eyes.

Tell me where it hurts.

I'll hurt myself to ease your mind. And ease the tension.

My better half finishes my sentences. It's worth it.

Just be persistent, so ardent.

We'll go the distance. On an expedition.

In our mind when we're together. And savor this precious moment.

'Cause nothing lasts forever.

Never felt this way so at first the feeling scared me.

Scared of something new. Comfortable.

She says she's there for me and through my darkest moments.

When I was low and couldn't feel her.

Words were justified by action.

Kisses like fireworks and touches make me tingle.

Your eyes are two stars in the night.

I watch them twinkle -- I get lost in them.

Feeling for that bottom lip.

Your words are inspiration, makes me say stuff like this.

This feeling caught me off guard.

No question 'bout what it was. Damn. U found love.

**-Joselin**

**From The Beat: This is a wonderfully descriptive poem about love. As complex an issue love is, you broke it down while still retaining its beauty. You are credited for taking the chance at expressing yourself through just the right words.**

## Ghost Hands

Birdie says

"Different fo'you --

Somebody wanna find you real bad.

So many folks! And them dogs!

Feel the hunt?

All night an' now day.

When it was me, nobody looked."

I say,

"No one? Never?"

Birdie says,

"So long ago, anyways.

Ain't nobody left knows my name.

So what they call you?"

I look at my ghost hands.

Fingers melt away.

I have no edges.

I tell Birdie,

"Well, once I was Shayon."

**-Shayon**

**From The Beat: Wow, Shayon. This is powerful and the images are crystal clear. You've melted and are feeling invisible, in the shadows. Please think about how you can emerge from them once again. And if you do, would you want to be something different? Would you want the dogs on you?**

## Money Can't Change Relationships

Money can't fix a relationship with your parents. And it cant fix a relationship with your girlfriend either. All many can do is pay financial bills.

**-Shayon**

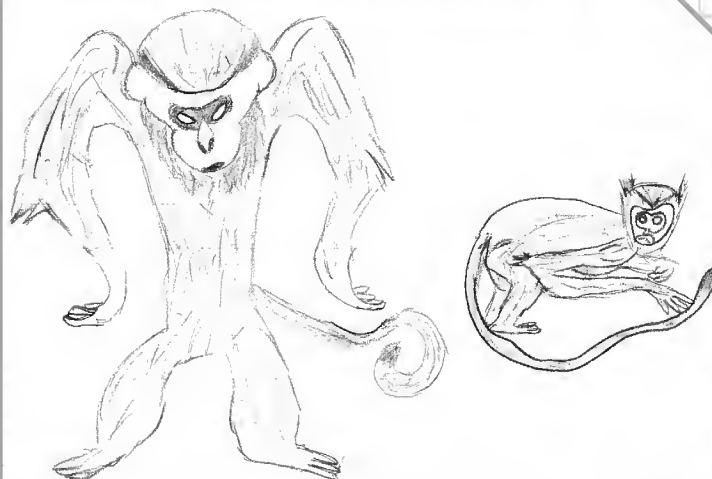
**From The Beat: Yes, yes, and yes. So what does it take to repair these relationships? What inside of you needs to come out in order to heal what you think you can heal? And what do you wish for in those you are in relationships with?**

## Why not me?

Why it couldn't have been me? I always ask God why he took my vultures away – why not me. Then I ask God when it's my turn. But I know if I stay on the right track, I might go to heaven.

**-Joselin**

**From The Beat: In between thoughts of people you've lost, we hope you consider all the lessons you've gained and we wish you all the strength you might need to stay on that right track.**



## The Set Up (Part 1)

D-Dog: "Hey, JJ, you want to go see them girls that we met at the club other night? 'Cause they been begging me and you to come over there for the last three days."

JJ: "Man, bro, I really don't know about that crap going to meet them girls, I got a bad vibe about them girls 'cause they look like they just trying to get in a man's pockets, and I heard that them girls down the way be getting' fools murdered."

D-Dog: "Man, JJ, them girls ain't on that stuff, the only thing they want is a man and that's it, so what's up? You gonna slide with your boy or what?"

JJ: "Damn, dog, you always getting me with that shhh. Yes, I'm gonna slide, but how we gonna get down that way?"

D-Dog: "I had already hollered at Cam-D about letting me use his car, alright, then let's go and holla at Cent and see if he would let us hold the Mac II and the four-five, alright?"

JJ and D-Dog went to D-Dog's house to get Cam-D's car. When they got to the house, they went straight to the car, got in and D-Dog started it up.

As they drove out of D-Dog's yard, JJ said "Dog, Cent should be around by the Cookie Store and you know he always keeps the you know what on him." Within two and a half minutes, they saw Cent posted up on the Cookie Store wall.

JJ: "Hey, Cent, check it out bro bro."

Cent: "Yeah, what up J?"

JJ: "Hey, Cent, me and D-Dog is about to go down the way and I want to know if you would let us hold your FYE?"

Cent: "What y'all need J is the Mac II and the 4-5. Damn boy y'all lucky today 'cause I was just about to sell them things,

but hold up...I'll be right back."

In seconds, Cent came back with a black bad and two pairs of black gloves and said "Here, you lil' ninjas, go."

D-Dog: "A'ight, Cent, we out bro. We'll holla at you later."

Now JJ and D-Dog are on their way to the town. In about a half hour they were in town, and at the girl's house they met the other night. JJ got out of the car and went to knock on the door when D-Dog said, "J, how much money do you have on you?"

JJ: "About \$5,600. And you?"

D-Dog: "About \$7,000. A'ight JJ, let's go in there and see them girls and then leave."

JJ: "A'ight, Dog."

When they got into the house, Sarah and Kim greeted them and they began getting heavy. Within about ten minutes, all of a sudden three boys came through the house by kicking down the door with a loud noise and said "GET ON THE FLOOR!"

JJ: "Man, screw you"

The boys repeated, "get down!"

D-Dog: "JJ, get down before they kill...."

One of the boys shouted, "Y'all shut the hell up!"

JJ and D-Dog were both thinking the same thing: Why in the hell didn't they bring the damn FYE and park the car in the yard.

To the continued...

**-John**

**From The Beat:** John, we all want to see how this ends up! You write vividly and take us directly into the action. What are these characters about and what brought them here? Where are YOU within this story? Hopefully we'll learn more about this soon.



## Alone

Why do I have to feel so alone?  
Like walking in the rain, as a bum with no home.  
Got stress on my mind, feels like a ton on my back.  
The pressure's building slowly, I swear I'm gonna crack.  
Wishin' I wouldn't have done what I did back then.  
Now I'm trapped in this cell, till God knows when.

**-Remek**

**From The Beat:** Remek, you use a few words to paint a picture worth 1,000. Well done. We hope you can find some support to ease the loneliness and pressure.

## Bring Back My Dead

If I could go back in time, knowing what I know today, and prevent that one death from happening -- a homeboy from violence -- I think my life would be better. I think I would be on the outs. He was a special person. I would tell him that I love him.

**-ZoeForLife**

**From The Beat:** In simplicity, you have expressed true feelings about a lost friend. We can't go back in time but we can move forward knowing how important people we've lost are in our lives, and just how precious life really is.



*If I change my life that would make my Grandma happy, and if I would make my Grandma happy that would make me happy!*

## Better Days

Better days seem so far.

Times keep moving like miles on a car.

As I watch days go by, I always wonder why?

Why are these days so bad, why am I sad.

I know if I just hold on, better days will come.

Like when I was little, always having fun.

Yesterdays worries are gone, that's all in the past.

Tomorrow is a mystery that will come fast,

today is a gift that's why it's called the present.

Hope for better days with a blessing.

Better days will come but it's a matter of time.

Wait for days to change be better and shine,

we just got to hold on. Things will get easy,

I just got to have faith and keep on believing.

Hope for the best expect the best,

that's all we can do forget the rest.

Bad days are hear but won't last.

Soon this miserable life will be in the past.

If we can survive today,

tomorrow will bring happiness;

better days will come and grant your wish.

**-Xavier, YDDC**

**From The Beat:** The key to what you call "Miserable life" is what you learn from them. Learn to better your life, so your not back where you are now.

## The Good And Bad In Me

I'm sitting in my cell thinking what the hell, I could be doing something better with my life then sitting in jail. Starring at these white bricks making me trip, I miss my familia and my Lady, shhh, I know I can do better then this, but when I'm on the streets I'm to stubborn to see that there's more to life then gang banging, and serving them friends.

I'm trying to snap and see where I'm going to be in the next three years, but I'm facing eighteen. That's not a sight to see, I hope I get out.

I would make a perfect life for me. Starting with making Reyna, my wife to be, and getting a good job to keep me free, I got people to help me when I'm in time of need. I know in my mind what I need to succeed, it's just when I'm on the streets it's a hole different me, Baby Syco comes out, he's got a reputation to keep. He thinks in his mind that he has to hurt people to survive, Baby Syco, is a creation from the streets.

Jesus, that's a whole different part of me, still stubborn, but sweet and smarter then you think, going to college for criminal justice. Not that's a sight to see, yeah, I got to personalities. I don't care what you think, I wrote this for all to read, there's good in everybody even me. It just takes a while for you to see.

**-Jesus**

**From The Beat:** It's sounds like you know exactly what you have to do; now the choice is yours. Do you want to be "Baby Syco" or do you want to be Jesus? Know, if you continue as Baby Syco, you'll remain where you are, or you can have the flip side, to the life you're living now.

## Sacrificing for my future

To make my future better, I got to give up a lot of things. I got to give up all my old ways, my old friends, my old doings, my old everything.

Lots of things have kept me from making this sacrifice, but now that I'm locked up nothing is, but me. I've been in the Bernalillo County Juvenile Detention Center for a month, and none of my friends have wrote me or even tried to do anything to get a hold of me. The only ones that have are my Grandma and my parents.

When I think of the sacrifice's that my Grandma has made for me, I think to myself 'why can't I make a couple of sacrifice's to make her happy?' She's done everything for me, why can't I do a little bit for her? My Grandma has given up a lot for me. When I had no place to go she welcomed me with open arms, when I got kicked out of school she was there too pick me up, when I came to jail she was the one to pick me up, when I needed money she gave it to me with no questions. Whenever I needed anything she was the one to give it to me. When I think about all the stuff my Grandmas done for me I think 'why would it be hard to change my life. If I change my life that would make my Grandma happy, and if I would make my Grandma happy that would make me happy!

**-Ian, YDDC**

**From The Beat:** It's sad to think of how you treated your family and the way you treated your friends, but when it comes down to it you have to learn the hard way, who your true friends and family are.

*I don't care what you think, I wrote this for all to read, there's good in everybody even me. It just takes a while for you to see.*

## Changin' My Way's

Changin' my way's

Walkin' down the streets

Sayin' I'm an ex-convict

Ex-convict

Gangs don't mean nothin' to me, fool

Cause I'm keepin' my head up

Sayin'

These two words

I'm ex-convict

Ex-convict

Ain't goin' back

Had put my life to pause

Right then an there

Had kept me from my lil' boy Jeremiah

He name came from the bible

He goin' to be holy

This is no preach

This is the life

This is true story

It ain't comin' from my mouth

It comin' from my heart

The tears comin' from my eyes

Is no day, feelin' lonely

In that cell havin' nobody to talk...

**-Diamond**

**From The Beat:** Life's all about a choice, take your life out of "pause", and start living, so you can be with that "lil boy Jeremiah". Stop thinking as an "ex-convict" and start thinking like a mom.



## Memory lane

Take a trip with me down memory lane, but this isn't a happy trip to feel my pain. See what I see and know why I'm me, hold my hand, close your eyes and just visualize.

It starts at age 5. The chaos is no lie. Daddy's leaving in a cop car, why is mommy crying so hard. Now my pops is in prison. No dad around. This is when my life gets lost and will never be found, now fifteen moms trying her best. This kid who loved school and sports no one would have guessed. Young with no fillings gives his life to his hood. It seems like every things wrong, nothing all good.

It never gets better, it only gets worse. Crying out for help, stuck with this curse, mom's grip is slipp'in, she can't hold him no more. He's full of tattoos, his mammas hart is tore. He's well known in the streets. Loves to carry his cold heat, gots it in his waist line, pulls it out in the drop of a dime, now he's 16 and feeds on pain, and hate. Seen his homie die, and used to being behind gates. Every day selling grams to make life good, cuz he know no one makes it out of the hood. December, getting faded out of his mind, hate mixed with being drunk. His eyes are blind. Pulls out his peace, lets it exploded watching that person stumble and fold. Now he's in jail can't get out of this cell, mom cries asks him why?

2008 spent locked behind doors, wearing jump suites, scrubbing floors. He wants to cry but the tears never come, he can't face his pain so he always runs. 2009, he spends locked up to, all by myself no gang, no crew, now hell sit in this 8 by 10 letting my mind free with this pen. 22 months of life he'll never get back, and will never be the same he knows for a fact. Parole seems to never come, frustrated, cuz this time isn't done. So he sits back and waits for my day, regretting the game he used to play. Now you seen what I have felt, my pain, never forget my memory lane.

A "Beat" wuts good? As for ya boy X just posted in DC. Still, now in Sandia cottage, but my times almost done, so I ain't trippin'. Here's some of my work enjoy. Peace out

**-Xavier, YDDC New Mexico**

**From the Beat:** It sounds like you have had one bad thing after another happen in your life. Now that your time is almost up, don't give up, but most of all don't go back to your old ways. Do your best to change for the better and learn from your mistakes. When you get out don't forget to send us updates on your life, and how you're doing in the outs.

## Wonder

Sometimes I wonder what's going on in my own head. I think that I want to do something with my life.

I wonder what it's going to be like ten years from now. I know that as a young man I am going to have to step up to the plate, I wonder what it would have been like if I did this or did that?

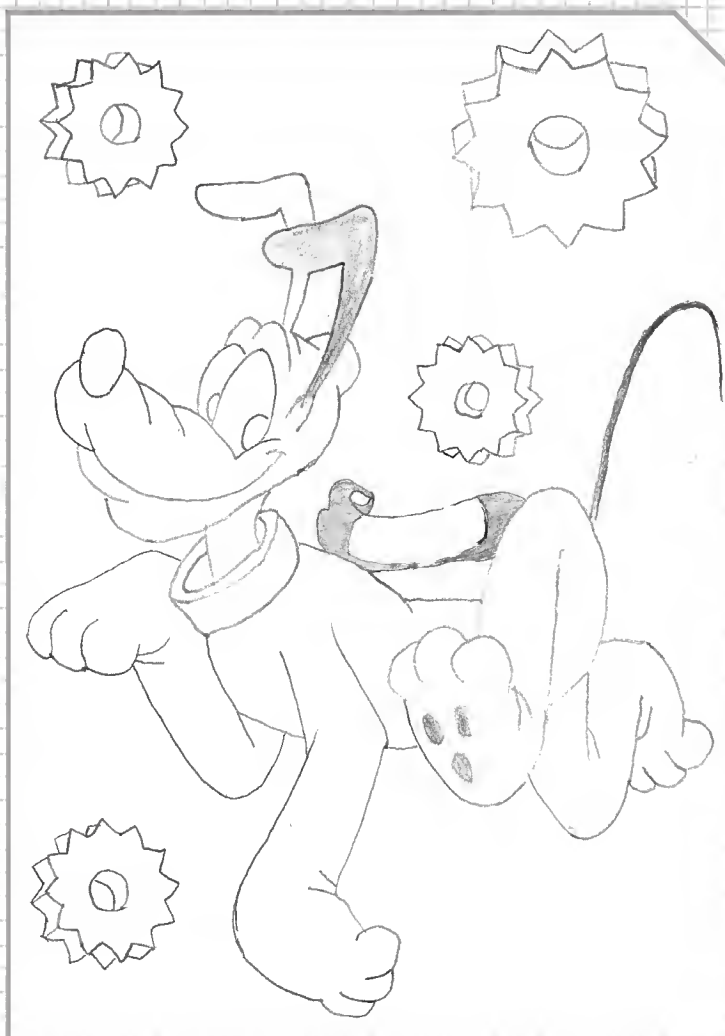
I wonder what it would have been like if I would have gone to school every day, and arrived on time to class.

I wonder what it would have been like if I did not get on probation and then violate my probation. I still wonder what it would be like to live my dreams and bring my homie's with me.

I wonder, but I know wondering isn't going to get me any where. I know that I got to try and accomplish what I need to do in order to be where "I wonder".

**-Joker**

**From The Beat:** Now that your "wondering" is done, do as you say, "step up to the plate", and do what you have to do, so you can stop "wondering".v



## Feeling The Beat!

I feel The Beat  
When my feet start tappin'  
But it's just a reaction  
I feel it in my hand  
When it hits the paper  
But my flows keep bustin' out on paper  
This is a girl feelin' "The Beat Within"  
With another excitement  
To The Beat!

**-Diamond**

**From The Beat:** Thank you for the quick poem, it always makes us at The Beat feel good, knowing that were making a difference, no matter how small the difference may be.

*It never gets better, it only gets worse. Crying out for help, stuck with this curse, mom's grip is slipp'in, she can't hold him no more.*

## If I Had a Second Life

If I had a second life I would want it to be better than my first,  
And it would be full of love and hurt.  
But in my second life would I be born from birth?  
And would I get ringworm from that same dirt?  
Or would I have spilled that juice stain on my same shirt?  
And instead of shooting that gun I should have been in church.  
I wonder what is a second life worth  
But if I had a second life, I would do things different  
Like staying out too late and my mother thought I was missing  
In this life her feet I should be kissing  
But I appreciate you all for listening  
To my second life  
But keep your first one it's worth no price.

-Paul

**From The Beat:** You keep blessing us with wonderful work, Paul! You ask some interesting questions about what a second life might look like, while reminding us to cherish the life we have. All while keep a strong rhyme and rhythm. Given that we only have one, are you ready to make the changes you mention for your second life in this one?

## Before I Sleep, I Pray to The Lord My Soul to Keep

When I sit back in my room and pray,  
I wonder do my enemies say the things I say.  
I wonder do he listen, or put us aside.  
But at some times, I sit back and cry.  
Because all the things I have done, it's been a sin.  
But all I ever tried to do was go out and win.  
Be the best man I could be.  
But some of my family ashamed of me.  
'Cause I robbed and sold ninjas drugs  
They say I'm just being another young thug.  
All my intentions are good,  
But overlooked 'cause I'm from the hood.  
Late at night before I lay in my bed,  
I pray to God he could bring back my man Lil' Ed.

- Sam

**From The Beat:** Sam, we loved this piece. You're saying some powerful things through some good rhymes. How can you find new ways to show the people around you that your intentions are good? What are some ways you can "go out and win" without getting yourself in trouble?

## Pictures and Times

Pictures remind me of old and good times.  
Sometimes I think what was I doing on that day and time.  
Sometimes I wonder what's going through my mind.  
I feel like a spy looking from behind.  
Trying to find out who I really am on the inside.  
I am not a person that likes to commit crimes,  
I was just around the wrong people at the wrong time.  
But I can fix all this just in the right time.

My favorite picture is of me when I was a baby on 4th of July. I was 2 years of age. I was also real cute and handsome. A lot of my family was in the picture.

-Marcus

**From The Beat:** You do a great job capturing the feeling of looking at a picture and trying to remember how things were back then—"like a spy looking from behind." And we love your optimism. There is plenty of time to change things, and show people the kind of person you really are. Make it happen!

## Remaking America...

I think that the only way we can remake America is to go out there and work for our money. I think Obama is going to put the people that are in poverty in nice houses.

First thing we have to do is change ourselves. Not mess up the community. We need to fight for what's ours. We need to help our young youth finish school and go to college. But also the way we grew up is to fight.

All these people were leaders, like Martin Luther King, Jr., and Malcolm X. Barack Obama is going to spend the economy money on something positive. Like many people said, we thought we would never see a black president. But look, the work is done and there will be change. But now I'm about to dig deeper.

I heard a lot of people talking about Obama being killed. I'm glad that no one actually tried to do something like that. There's one thing I wanted to see which is that Obama would put us in schools with his daughters. That will be another historical moment. I also think Barack Obama will make marijuana legal. I think violence is good and bad, because you need to protect yourself, but the bad thing is that you can kill and hurt people. We want to help and nurture people. I think that everyone should be valedictorian. I don't think that it is good to fire people and take their jobs from them.

-Patrick

**From The Beat:** We love your commitment to supporting the community and young people in school. We'd like to know more about your thoughts on violence. You say it's necessary to protect yourself, but do you think we could ever move away from having to protect ourselves? Is this a possible or realistic goal?

## Changes Made in the Economy

In DC they are pushing the poor out of the hood as fast as they can.

Is it because of the violence or the young black man?

As the economy starts to change day by day

They move us out of our home just to get us away

As things get worse, I can see the difference

All homeowners care for is the money they're getting

It shouldn't be that way in our economy

But everyone knows that the world revolves around money.

-Daniel

**From The Beat:** In rhyme, you remind us of an old fact: the world revolves around money. You also address the changes taking place in neighborhoods all over the city. Are there things that can be done to give poor people in the city more power, so that they can't be pushed out so easily? We need strong voices to call attention to these issues the way you are, and we hope you'll keep it up.

## Picture that I Can Reminisce On

I have two pictures that I will always remember. One is my baby picture because when I get older I can reminisce on my child life. Your child life is the best one.

Second is my Oak Hill picture because I took a popular pose that everybody would remember. This is the best one because I can show my mom when I get home and my little brother. And also when I have kids I can show them what it was like.

When I get home I'm going to put that picture in a frame on the wall of fame. All the girls are going to like it because of my smile and also my pose. Yeah I did send that picture to everybody.

And when I publish this I'm going to send it to my family and when I get home I'm going to read it again.

-Lil' Whan

**From The Beat:** We're glad you share your work in The Beat with loved ones. What will you tell your littler brother, and others, about your time at Oak Hill? What other pictures do you hope to be able to share one day? Graduation pictures? Vacation pictures? There is so much ahead for you, we look forward to hearing about what other pictures await.



### Who Really Suffers From The Choices

So what's up, Beat Within? This your boy, Frank, coming at you guys from the hall. So I wanted to let you guys up on some game about how my life has been since I started making some messed up choices for myself, and who my choices really affect in the long.

So, it all starts about when I turned 11 years old. My grandma had passed away and she was like a second mom to me, and from when she had past I started messing up in life. Started doing drugs, getting caught up with the 5-0, and started getting locked up and I kept telling my parents I'm done with my mistakes but I was not real, I was lying.

Not only was I putting my mom and dad in tears and pain, but I couldn't see that I was just bullshhing myself but I could not see it but I had to find out the hard way. As days went by and years, I find myself, at 16 year's old, now hurting more than just my parents, I'm hurting all my family and my baby mama, but not just them but myself too.

Now I'm an alcoholic, about to be a dad, sitting in this unit thinking to myself, "I'm done hurting my family, my girl. I'm done putting myself in this place because of the choices I wanna make," and the reason why I know that I'm done making bad choices and hurting everyone is 'cause now I'm not only talking about it, I'm doing what I got to do to get my life back on track and I could tell you this, I'm being real. This ain't just talk.

I'm ready to clean myself up and be a good soul and a good dad and ready to make the right choices that will make my family happy and put us in a good spot. I'm done with the hall, third time and last time. Trust me, you ain't hearing from me again. I'm out and to all, just make that right choice 'cause it ain't just effing you, alright Late.

**-Frank, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** You're right, you have a child on the way and you can't afford to mess it up this time around. You're life is worth more than what you're making it and your child deserves a father who will be there. We hope that you can really step it up and make the changes you need, you never know when it might be too late. Keep us posted!

### Only Free With Closed Eyes

My heart is aching, my memories are now dreams  
Every time I close my eyes, I see darkness, but still I feel free

I'm gone but haven't left; everything looks so clear  
The sky is cloudless and the light appears  
At least in this place I can escape the madness  
The sun shines bright, here I have no sadness  
I was a kid who was hurt physically and emotionally  
The pain is like a disease that will stay in me permanently

When I awake from sleeping, the walls close in  
Reality hit home, I lived a life filled with sin  
They say the simple plan for life is change  
Then why am I still this person who remains the same  
Years keep passing, tears begin to fall  
Held them back to hide feelings, oh too long  
I was happy once before, at least that's what I thought  
Did everything my way then... was mad and upset when I got caught

**-Crazy L, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** This is such a powerful and painful poem, CL! That pain you carry around like a disease may be permanent, but it doesn't have to weigh you down all the time. The memory of pain is not the pain itself, so we can understand why your own mind could be your sanctuary. To be honest, your words remind us of a character in a Shakespeare play, King Lear, who said: "I am a man/ More sinned against than sinning." Whatever you have done — and we don't want to minimize it — what was done to you as a child is the true sin. Forgive yourself.

### I Ain't Mad At You

I ain't mad at you primo, 'cause you put it down.  
I feel you right next to me, even though you not around.

You was a well known "g" up in Sacramento  
who covered ground, with his gold crown  
I remember the phone call when I was in the hall

A tear fell down my cheek as I hit the wall  
Then it hit me that my cousin was long gone  
Legend to his hood, so his name forever lives on.

I stood strong, because his life was a sad song  
Everything that ever happen to him went wrong  
I always wondered to myself how he made it through?

He had nothing in life that he could pursue  
He held his little brother's body when the slug ripped his chest

Closed his eyes with his fingers and his head he caressed  
He witnessed his step-father take his mothers last breath  
Then he used a hammer and beat his step-fathers ass to death

He did his years and got out on parole  
Moved in with my cousin and had himself a set goal  
He promised us he'll protect us with his help

We were everything to him, he had nobody else  
He was one of a kind, the craziest fool you'd ever meet  
Stuff he did would even sometimes scare me

Steve from Sacramento  
Bring an army, he'd bring himself and you can't compete  
I blame myself when I feel guilt creep

But the truth is he fell victim to these bloody ruthless streets

And when I sleep at night I could hear my heart beat  
echoing away  
following my cousin deep weep

He got shot a few times and he still survived  
He said he'd never let an enemy take his life  
And he was right, 'cause that stupid vato took his own

He said that he'd always live and die by the chrome  
He stole my homies gun and I said "the hell  
and supposedly before he died he told his lady he "loves me too".

I never imagined my big cousin being suicidal,  
yet again held act like a bleeding brood without her midol.  
You didn't just take your life, you took a little piece of ours

And I still lie to myself and say your floating with the stars  
I miss you fool...How much more can I do?

Than lace this game with your name and pour a 40 out for you

You took a bigger bite, then you thought that you could chew

But you really took a bite out of what the city fed you  
We can't blame each other,  
but we could blame the animal living in the jungle of California's State Capitol

I don't know what it is?

But I do recognize, that it hasn't ate me for the fact I'm still alive  
I've witnessed hell, through these light brown eyes  
But compared to what you seen would make an OG cry

So I'll finish what you left and climb up that ladder.  
Take care of the family and those who really matter.

Did you wonder what it'd look, if you seen your blood splatta.

But it's whatever, 'cause I love you and I can't be mad at ya.

**-Jon Jon, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** We're sorry for your cousin, for his loss and for the crazy life he had to put up with. But in this writing, it seems like you are going to follow his lead. Or are we wrong? Think about what happened to him? Killed someone, served years in prison, got shot a few times and ended up taking his own life. Tragic. You don't want this type of life for your life? Do you? Take care of what's yours and learn from this experience. By the way, you got a great talent as a writer. Don't throw that away.

### That Lucky Leaf Clover

What happens when it's all over  
 When you plucked your last lucky clover  
 You got shot and lived... that was luck  
 Took it for granted, and it was pluck after pluck  
 Look around, there's no more  
 And you wonder why death is at your door  
 Open up, you might as well  
 Don't act surprised if you're sent to hell  
 You earned your way, now you should stay  
 Ain't no point on kissing ass to the Lord  
 You were down enough to pull out the sword  
 From the rock claiming your king of the block  
 So take responsibility for what you've done  
 Now that it's over, including the fun  
 You were higher than the sky late at night  
 Surprised to see the sun shine its light  
 Couldn't even think straight  
 Heart beating at a horse's rate  
 Too dizzy so you passed out  
 Should have listened to your soul shout  
 You lived with nothing but luck  
 And there you go, pluck after pluck  
 It only took a finger, pop, pop, pop  
 Disappointed because your target didn't drop  
 Wrong people screaming so you ran  
 Wondering why the bullet didn't stick to the plan  
 You're disturbed from your nap  
 By a detective talking about a murder rap  
 You could have sworn so one was hit  
 But they claim you're the perfect fit  
 They didn't have to be as sharp as a knife  
 To stick the case and put you away for life  
 On your hands and knee looking for a clover  
 But you forgot you were pluck after pluck  
 Now your cloverleaf luck is over

-Cisco, Santa Clara

**From The Beat:** We had to change the number you used in your title, Cisco, but we have only admiration for this tragic poem that tells such a sad, and much too familiar, story. We've come to hate those guns that, in the hands of children, so easily destroy lives in an instant, and not just the lives of those that get hit and their families, but also those of the hitters and their families. Now, your world has changed, so it's a good thing that you arise from your hands-and-knees search for clover and start putting the pieces of your life back together. Even behind bars, human beings can rise above their circumstances. Some develop relationships with people on the outs that they may never otherwise have been exposed to; some write incredible books which change people's perceptions; some are able to explore their own minds in ways they never had the opportunity to do before. Of course, none of these "benefits" outweighs the loss of freedom, but we know far too many so-called free people who never explore anything beyond their very limited experiences, and who are truly imprisoned by a lack of imagination. Fortunately, you are not one of them!

### Thinking

All day I think think about me ma family, ma girl, ma life ma future. Sometime thinking lead's to stress and you get mad. But you really cant get mad because you only thinking. That's like you getting mad at the truth. Feel me.

But when people think sumthing about you it really can't hurt you because it's all in their head. Only if they speak it to you and it fits you then you can worry but other than that it shouldn't matter.

Me I don't care what people think bout me because I'm me feel me, but this young Nuttso I'm gone.

-Young Nuttso, Alameda

**From The Beat:** We agree it really doesn't do much good to worry about what other people think about you, unless you have a good chance to set it straight. What makes you mad when you think about your life?

### One Day in Our Shoes

If the PO, DA or judge could live in the conditions we do they would realize that this is not a "rehabilitation process" as they like to call it. Have them spend around 16 hours in their room, eat when people tell you to, wake up to ice water showers, and not have people listen to what you have to say.

People don't care about what you've done or what you're trying to do. None of that matters to them. They don't care about our futures because they think we're all going to be failures. And that's the purpose of jail, to oppress (hold people down) and not let us up.

-Ballard, San Francisco

**From The Beat:** We've come to expect your deeply analytical thinking that lets you get under the surface of things. Jail has many purposes, but oppression is certainly one of them. (Another is job security for thousands of people.) But if keeping you down is what they're about, then it seems to us that true revenge is beating this system, getting out and educating yourself so that you can expose some of the worst abuses, and live your own life while doing it!

### One Love, One Life, One Struggle

Days passed and I'm still incarcerated. No release date Court dates continue to pop up; continuing to mark each day

That slowly passes by

Start losing pages on the calendar; stressing on how months fly

I just want an answer from the Father up high,

"Why hasn't the judge sentenced me for my case?"

I created all this dead time

I'm slowly losing my mind

I don't think I could take it

I always think about letting go but I know I'll regain it I

It's like a game between life and death

I'm slowly trying to live my life without going through hell

By being incarcerated, but it's the evil ways inside of me

I love them, plus the game play all day every day

Engraved in my veins

But when you see Peanutt going insane

Don't trip, I'm just letting out the rage

That be carried throughout the hardest days of the life I lead

So please, Lord, when I go to court I would like to see a blessing

When the judge is eying me I start sweating and stressing

Thinking what the heck is going to happen to me

Am I going to get out, get sentenced, or get another court date thrown at me

Well Beat, that's something little for you, but you know

I always got more. But I would like to say I'm going to probably serve three years in CYA. I hope everything is OK when I get out. I hope my wife holds our love down (Elissa) and keeps it 100% real. Also, it's always and forever Precious. Stay solid straight up 100 rounds you feel me my love.

-Peanutt, Santa Clara

**From The Beat:** We hope you don't mind that we typed your piece up as a poem (and separated it into two different pieces). It just sounded like that to us. Waiting can be the hardest part of this process since you have absolutely no control over moving it forward, but simply have to wait for things to happen. We're not worried that you'll really go crazy, Peanutt, because you've got too much going on for that to happen. Three years is long, but not so long that you can't start planning for the life you (and Precious) want to live when this is all behind you. The only advice we can give is to avoid the provocations to fight inside the Y; that's just a trap to add more time.



### Rich To Poor Or Poor To Rich

Poverty! Being poor has its ups and downs. See, as I was growing up, money was a huge factor. My mom drove us around to stores that accepted food stamps, and we would go in with one dollar in food stamp money and buy a ten-cent candy. The cashier has to give us change in currency, so that's mainly how we got our money. It was hard, don't get me wrong.

If any judge, PO or DA ever went through my situation, they would understand our struggles that poor people had to go through. I bet they were born into rich families and are stuck up.

Also, like I said, being poor has its ups, too. Being poor brings your family closer than ever, and you learn to stick together. I believe if you put a PO in my position, then it would open up his/her eyes to all the crossroads we have to face. They would learn that being incarcerated is not so good and it would make them put all their efforts into putting us youngsters into rehabilitation programs. Also, my mom told me money is not everything. It won't make you happy, and if it does, then you're an unthoughtful person. She says money is for survival, and without it, our family has no structure and we would eventually live on the streets.

So, to all the people that strive to get money, pursue on what talents you have to offer to society. So, do you think money is everything? It's not...

**-Chango, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** We love the advantages you list for not having money because they are worth so much more. We also think people with power would learn to use it more wisely if they had to experience that their decisions meant. At the same time, it might also work in the other direction. You might learn, if you got to be in their shoes, that not all were born into it, and that some people had to make major sacrifices in their lives to get what they have. Not everyone, but some.

### An Innocent Child Made Wile

A creature that runs free and wild,  
It's beautiful in the eyes of nature  
And in Mother Earth's eyes beguiled  
Astoundingly magnificent, but unaware of its danger  
Blinded by freedom, it maintains an oblivious demeanor  
Protected by Mother Earth and secretly cast out by society

The creature wanders unknowing like a dreamer  
In an instant his world is jarred and gone are his skies  
Looked upon by society as a savage  
But in his mind run thoughts of an innocent child  
Society frightened by the rumors, cast him out like burdens and baggage  
They put him in a cage and his mind runs wild  
His mind pumps furiously as he wonders why  
He grows numb as he mills with the previously captured  
His mind no longer innocent, his eyes refuse to cry  
As time slowly flows, freedom is no longer reassured  
The creature feeling no longer magnificent and free  
But society has him feeling like an outcast  
Once released he goes to the life society said he would lead  
He throws away his innocence and says good-bye to the past  
A creature no longer free but definitely wild.

**-Cisco, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** For a wild creature, you have a remarkable ability to tame your words, to make just a few of them count for so much. Don't surrender to what "society" predicted for you, Cisco! Look deeply within yourself, and you will find, still, that beautiful child, wanting to love and be loved. Sometimes, feeling numb is necessary self-protection, but numb is not the same as gone. You are still there, even though your innocence has been badly bruised. But even injured, you are full of life and hope. Saying good-bye to the past is one thing, but someone with your gifts must never say good-bye to the future!

### From Past To Present

Sure, you could say I knew it was a bad idea,  
that years would be taken  
and leave a dent in my soul.

Tears of disbelief ran down my mother's face  
as I stood in silence,  
listening to that voice,  
a language that felt foreign,  
telling my story.

It's been three years now.

I think I have another chance  
to change the question:

Is she a fool?

to -

What would you like?

My fear has turned to trust

as I breath in and face the rest.

**-L, Santa Cruz**

**From The Beat:** This is a fine poem. And we like the language you're speaking here. Good work L.

### "Yes I Can"

What I would like to say to the new president is, I am glad that you became president because I believe that you're going to make a big difference in our life.

With the war, I know you'll try to stop it and I love that you don't start judging people, you help people. Thank you for saying No against Prop 8 because I believe that everybody should be treated equally and fair because they are people just like us, there's no difference. So I think that's a good thing that you did.

When I found out that you became president I started crying because you're going to make such a big difference. Financial problems, health care, and jobs are the main things that people need help with, especially me because with my financial problems I am having trouble.

My dad's on disability and we don't have money; we barely have money for the rent, food, and electricity. I wish we could have more this Christmas. I didn't get anything for Christmas 'cause we didn't have no money but I didn't care. It just hurt me that my little sister and brother didn't get a Christmas gift, they only got a card with candy and they were happy but I started to cry for them because it hurts seeing my little brother and sister without nothing under the tree.

The same thing with health care. My dad's really sick right now, he has diabetes and liver problems but my parents don't have health care no more. My dad's been in the hospital more then five times because he's really sick 'cause his liver. The doctor told him that it's going to take up to five years to get a new liver. I wish that I could just take my liver out and give it to him so he could be okay again but sometimes its not that easy. He's getting sicker each day and I can't see that no more.

But I know you're going to start changing things, I am really counting on you because you change so much. Obama, what was so inspirational about you, you said in one of your speeches "yes we can." That's powerful because you can make a difference, so can I. "Yes I can" make a difference in my life and get out of here and go to school and graduate high school. "Yes I can" go to college and study to be a doctor and do good with my life. "Yes I can make a difference" a difference but there's a problem.

My parents don't really have enough money for college, I wish they did, but no matter what I will succeed on going to college. I promise you, Barack Obama, that I will accomplish on my dream the same way you did. Thank you so much for making a change in my life.

**-Alicia, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** You are going through such a hard time, with your dad being sick and with all of the financial difficulties you're going through. How do you feel about being away from your family knowing that your dad is sick? We know that you must be a valuable source of comfort to your father and we hope that once you get out you stay out, to help your dad and to be a better role model to your brother and sis. Great heartfelt writing!

### I Ain't Mad At You

I ain't mad at you primo, 'cause you put it down.  
 I feel you right next to me, even though you not around.  
 You was a well known "g" up in Sacramento  
 who covered ground, with his gold crown  
 I remember the phone call when I was in the hall  
 A tear fell down my cheek as I hit the wall  
 Then it hit me that my cousin was long gone  
 Legend to his hood, so his name forever lives on.  
 I stood strong, because his life was a sad song  
 Everything that ever happen to him went wrong  
 I always wondered to myself how he made it through?  
 He had nothing in life that he could pursue  
 He held his little brother's body when the slug ripped his chest  
 Closed his eyes with his fingers and his head he caressed  
 He witnessed his step-father take his mothers last breath  
 Then he used a hammer and beat his step-fathers ass to death  
 He did his years and got out on parole  
 Moved in with my cousin and had himself a set goal  
 He promised us he'll protect us with his help  
 We were everything to him, he had nobody else  
 He was one of a kind, the craziest fool you'd ever meet  
 Stuff he did would even sometimes scare me  
 Steve from Sacramento  
 Bring an army, he'd bring himself and you can't compete  
 I blame myself when I feel guilt creep  
 But the truth is he fell victim to these bloody ruthless streets  
 And when I sleep at night I could hear my heart beat echoing away  
 following my cousin deep weep  
 He got shot a few times and he still survived  
 He said he'd never let an enemy take his life  
 And he was right, 'cause that stupid vato took his own

He said that he'd always live and die by the chrome  
 He stole my homies gun and I said "the hell  
 and supposedly before he died he told his lady he "loves  
 me too".  
 I never imagined my big cousin being suicidal,  
 yet again held act like a bleeding brood without her midol.  
 You didn't just take your life, you took a little piece of  
 ours  
 And I still lie to myself and say your floating with the  
 stars  
 I miss you fool...How much more can I do?  
 Than lace this game with your name and pour a 40 out for  
 you  
 You took a bigger bite, then you thought that you could  
 chew  
 But you really took a bite out of what the city fed you  
 We can't blame each other,  
 but we could blame the animal living in the jungle of  
 California's State Capitol  
 I don't know what it is?  
 But I do recognize, that it hasn't ate me for the fact I'm  
 still alive  
 I've witnessed hell, through these light brown eyes  
 But compared to what you seen would make an OG cry  
 So I'll finish what you left and climb up that ladder.  
 Take care of the family and those who really matter.  
 Did you wonder what it'd look, if you seen your blood  
 splatta.  
 But it's whatever, 'cause I love you and I can't be mad at  
 ya.

**-Jon Jon, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** We're sorry for your cousin, for his loss and for the crazy life he had to put up with. But in this writing, it seems like you are going to follow his lead. Or are we wrong? Think about what happened to him? Killed someone, served years in prison, got shot a few times and ended up taking his own life. Tragic. You don't want this type of life for your life? Do you? Take care of what's yours and learn from this experience. By the way, you got a great talent as a writer. Don't throw that away.

### Just Because

Prostitutes, go-gettsa, hustlas, and drug dealers  
 Robbers, thugs, gangsters, and killas  
 To me it's a daily to see these types of people  
 And the game has a special hold as my soul keepa  
 Here's the thing people mess up  
 Just cuz I'm white don't mean my house aint been shot  
 up  
 Just because I have no scars don't mean I haven't been  
 in a war  
 And just because I don't cry openly doesn't mean I'm not  
 sore  
 Just because I aint been shot don't mean I aint been shot  
 at  
 And just because I smoke don't mean I smoke crack  
 Just because my parents got money don't mean I haven't  
 lived on the streets  
 And even though I'm a hustla I have tear stains on my  
 cheeks  
 You wouldn't believe my story, even if I told you  
 You can tell from my writing that this shhh is true  
 Just open your eyes from racism and see  
 That just because I'm white doesn't make me one thing

**-Walnut, Solano**

**From The Beat:** You understand the frustration of being stereotyped. Writing is often a great way to authentically express who you are, in part because it goes beyond immediate appearances.

### In My Fresh J's

If you took a walk in my shoes  
 You'd see money  
 You'd see females  
 You'd see the good and the bad side of life  
 When it comes to bad  
 You see my family dying  
 People getting shot and killed  
 People getting robbed  
 You see poor  
 You see people addicted to drugs  
 You see pain, suffering, guilt  
 And loneliness  
 Oh yeah, and depression  
 When it comes to good  
 You see love  
 Peace  
 You see little children playing  
 You see happiness  
 You see friendships  
 And you see loving family members  
 If you take a walk in my shoes  
 This is what you see

**-Chubbs, Alameda**

**From The Beat:** This is a great piece, thanks for sharing. You really give the readers a sense of where you come from and what your life is like, both the bad and the good. Keep up the writing!



## Como Nos Volvemos Violentos

Hola amigos y amigas. Pues aqui les Saluda Luis. Respondiendo a la pregunta sobre como los jóvenes se vuelven violentos.

Bueno, desde mi punto de vista, yo digo que se vuelven violentos cuando se meten en pandillas. Quiza porque lleban el nombre de un barrio y por defenderlo se pelian. Por el honor a ese barrio, terminan peliandose hasta matandose.

Yo si era violento tiempos atras cuando empeece a juntarme con pandilleros antes de llegar a este pais cuando vivia en el DF, Mexico. Ahi empeece a meterme en pandillas. Me peliaba constantemente con otros pandilleros según porque eran mis enemigos y no eran de mi barrio.

En Mexico tube una vida violenta. Despues me vine a este pais, anduve en pandillas por medio año, pero todo cambió cuando conocí a una novia. Ella me conoció pandillero, pero ella le dió a mi vida un jiro total. Me enseñó que la vida es linda. Me enseñó que la vida solo es una, me enseñó la palabra "amor." Aconsejandome me dijo que tomara otro rumbo en mi vida y que no fuera aquel pandillero del tiempo pasado porque sino algún día mi padres me iban a estar visitando en la cárcel o llebarme flores a un funera. Me dijo que a ese punto sería un gran dolor para ellos.

Ahora miren donde estoy aqui encerrado en la juvenil. ¿Y por qué estoy aqui? Simplemente por un robo que hice en Diciembre del año pasado. Mi vida nuevamente cambió cuando empeece a juntarme con un primo. Me dijo que fuéramos a robar.

**From The Beat:** Se nota que tu vida ha sido muy difícil. Gracias a tu novia pudistes ver la realidad de la vida, pero cometistes un error más. Lo principal es que ahora tienes un conocimiento que puedes usar para tus siguientes pasos de la vida. Mantente alejado de las malas influencias que te lleben al mismo camino de antes. Si tu novia te dijo que no eres la persona de antes es porque ella debió haberlo visto en ti. No pretendas ser la persona que no eres. No te niegues la oportunidad de ser una persona diferente. Ella es una Buena influencia en tu vida. Quedate ahí y no andes con tu primo u otro homie.

## How We Become Violent

Hi my friends. Well, this is Luis responding back to the question about how young people become violent.

Well, from my point of view, I say that they become violent when they get into gangs. Maybe because they claim the name of a 'hood and for defending it. For the honor of their gangs, they end up fighting until they kill themselves.

I was violent back in the days when I started hanging around a gang, before I came to this country in DF, Mexico. There I started messing with a gang. I would fight constantly with other gang members just for the simple fact that they were my enemies and were not from my 'hood.

In Mexico I lived a violent life. Later, I came to this country, joined a gang for a year and a half, but my life changed when I met my girlfriend. She met me as a gangster, but turned my life around totally. She taught me that life is beautiful. She taught me that life is only one, and taught me the meaning of the word "love." By giving me advice, she told me to change my path of life and to stop being the gangster I used to be because if not one day my parents were going to visit me in jail or bring me roses to my funeral. She told me that once I ended up to this point, it was going to create a big pain their lives.

Now, look at where I am, locked up in juvenile hall. And why am I here? Well, for a robbery. My life changed totally again when I started hanging with my cousin. He asked me to go rob.

**-Luis, Fresno**

**From The Beat:** It's obvious how hard your life has been. Thanks to your girlfriend, you got to see the reality of life. But you committed another mistake. The good things about all this are that you now have the knowledge that you can use for your next steps in life. Keep yourself away from bad influences that can lead you to past road. Don't deny the chance to be a different person from yourself. She is a good influence in your life. Stick with her and not with your cousin or other homie.

## Sacrificing For My Future

What I think I have to change about my life to make my future better is everything I was doing before I got locked up. I was doing everything that I wasn't supposed to be doing. I wasn't going to school, I was running with my ninjas, smoking, sippin' on some drank, goin' to parties, gettin' with so many females I could've been mistaken for a pimp. I have a mouthpiece for females. That's how it is with the men in my family.

There are so many things that I've done wrong in my life, and when I get out, I'm going to change for the better. I've decided to stop doing drugs and running the streets so I can focus on my schoolwork, which I really want to do so I can have a chance at getting my diploma. I've become more dedicated to my schoolwork in these past few months. I took my exit exam, and I think that I did a good enough job to pass. I tried my best.

I really want to get my diploma because it would open so many doors for my future, which I'm going to sacrifice a lot to make sure it will be a good one.

**-Donald, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** Even though your plan seems simple, it is profound. And if you follow what you've laid out here, we truly believe that the sacrifices you make today will pay you back a hundred times tomorrow. Congratulation on doing well on your exit exam, and frame that diploma when you get it so it can go on the wall right next to the college degree you'll earn afterwards...



## Fulfilling Her Dream

Wow! You know I've never really sat down and thought about what I would sacrifice for my future! I mean yeah I can name off some things like sacrificing my drug habit, how I spend my time, yeah those are easy to sacrifice, but I don't think I could make the sacrifice that my mom made!

Gosh I admire her so much, she had to quit school and she had to stop going out and partying with her friends, just to have me. Those parties turned into jobs and her dream of being a nurse faded away. Dang!

Now she had to take care of me and her life revolved around that. But now that I'm older she fulfilling her dream, she now a registered nurse R.N. Working a good job with not as much money worries, yeah she struggles sometimes, but not as much as she did back then.

I really don't think I could do what my mom did, but I guess that's why she's my mom and I love her! Moms rock socks! Lol! Well I'm out!

**-Lil' Skittles, Solano**

**From The Beat:** It sounds like your Mom re-organized her priorities when you were young, and it's cool she was able to return to school and achieve her dream. We hope it helps you to understand her—to know and appreciate this part of her life.



## Changing My Womanizing Ways

To change my future for the better and make things easier for myself I think I need to change my womanizing ways and stop being involved with so many women at one time. It gets kind of difficult to juggle all those women. Then they start complaining about how they feel neglected and I don't spend enough time with them. I wear myself thin trying to keep them all happy. And when feelings start to develop, that just complicates things even more. What can I say, I don't want to be a player no more.

**-B, Alameda**

**From The Beat:** This is an important piece, B. Your current situation sounds stressful for you, and also for the women involved. It also sounds very time consuming. Ideally, what kind of relationship would you like to have? And what are the challenges you see yourself facing?

## What Goes Around Comes Around

What's crackin'? This is Jon Jon placing some words in your face about my perspective of luck. Some believe it's a false superstition. Others think it's the reason stuff happens to them.

Me, I like using the superstition of luck. But the truth is it's a law of attraction. You pull positively or negativity into your surroundings, like a magnet, except you don't attract the opposite.

When you going around acting a fool and messing shhh up, a boomerang of what you consider bad luck will hit you from behind. When you doing cool and doing good things, good things will happen.

What goes around, comes around, but hit harder. I have a homebody named Mac. He always has cool shhh going good for him. All the homies consider him hella lucky. We even started calling him clover because he attracts luck, like a four leaf clover but really he just cool and laid back. He just handles situations when they comes his way or when we bring them his way.

Me and my canal are now unlucky. It always seems like messed up shhh always happens to us. But in reality, we be messing shhh up for ourselves. Yeah, we'll go out looking for trouble and getaway. But trouble always comes back looking for us to catch us on the rebound.

**-Jon Jon, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** It's like you said, if you're handling things right, good things will come your way, but if it not, then your current situation is the result of your actions. What would change the way your destiny is going? You should try to do things right and see what can come out of it. Give it a shot. Your life situation can change from bad to good.



## A Cop Made Me Realize

I'm going to write about me. I'm locked up because I wanted to start funk with an undercover.

I thought he wanted problems 'cause he was hella staring at us. So we went up to him and asked him where he was from. He said nowhere and said to leave the school before he knocks me out.

I got mad so I started walking up to him to hit him and he pulled out a gun telling me to get on the ground. I was talking smack to him so he slammed me to the wall.

He took me to the place where they take your fingerprints and talked to me about why I got "##@& love" on my wrist. He thought I got it because some girl broke my heart. I told him, "No, me and my girl are doing fine. It's about something else." So he started talking and asking me questions and he actually made sense.

A cop was making me realize what I got and what I'm doing to my mom and my girlfriend by being in here. I'm gonna try to change for them. It's gonna be hard but I'm gonna do it because I love them both.

**-Daniel, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** You fucked out, you should feel lucky. You didn't die that night but what if you come across someone mean mugging again? You might not be so lucky then. Don't take this close call to the head and just chalk it up to luck 'cause luck won't always be there to pull you out of another sticky situation.

*Just don't sacrifice your life for the negative stuff in life. My whole family is a screw up, but that doesn't mean I have to be one too.*

## Sacrifice

Sacrificing is a very hard thing to do. In my opinion, is extremely hard. I've been incarcerated my whole life, mostly,- and all I've heard is people talking lots of shhh and tons of peer pressure.

Me, being a ward of the state and all my life and I personally sometimes want to blame the government for my failures even though I know it's my own fault. I was put in places where others did drugs, fought and were active gang members. I was raised around that stuff and then people expect me not to except it as a way of life.

I think it was their error in putting me in those environments, but I am also aware that I am 100% responsible for my actions that is something that they have had no control over. My point to all this is that just take responsibility for your actions. I learned that if someone wants to talk their mouth off then let them, especially if you know you can beat their ass.

Drugs be above the influence of others. Just don't sacrifice your life for the negative stuff in life. My whole family is a screw up, but that doesn't mean I have to be one too. Just think about it.

**-Mike, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** Wherever you go, you will witness the same type of environment. But whether you get hooked or not, it's your choice and mistake, like you've said. We understand that growing in an environment full of negativity guided you to be the person you are, but what about now? You're an adult. You have hands, legs, and a brain to do anything you want in life. Now let's turn the page over, what do you think can make your life and choices easier?



## **Lucky Or Unlucky**

I feel like right now I'm unlucky. But to me, you make your own luck by the way you carry yourself. People treat you accordingly. I know I'm in here because of my own actions, but I know when I get out I'ma go back to my lucky ways,

I've got a master plan that will keep me out of here, and luck has nothing to do with it. Every time something goes wrong, people say they're just not lucky. But they don't notice that it might be their mistakes that brought the bad luck.

I've learned to use my luck, good or bad.

**-Nothing But Time, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** Having a plan for success puts the luck in lucky. We agree that most "luck" or "unluck" is the result of the choices we make, so if being here has caused you to plan to make different choices, then you should be able to put this unhappy experience behind you and move forward in freedom.

## **In The Halls**

Man, I been up in here for three months now... OMFG! I am so ready to get out of here. I was sittin' in my room lookin out the window the other day just wishing... wishing I was out, feeling the business of the streets of San Francisco. I hate being in here. It's not the place for me. This shhh is draining me. Making me lazy.

I know The Beat is gone ask me, "What are you going to do to change? How will you stay out of here?" Well, I'm tired of hearing those questions. The questions I wanna hear are: How'd you survive? Can I have your autograph? Did you learn from your mistakes?

All I'm sayin is I just need to get out and finish doing my music thing! Go back to the studio and make music. That's what I'm missing being in the "Halls."

**-Dow Jones, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** How'd you survive? Can we have your autograph? Did you learn from your mistakes?

## **What Goes Around Comes Around**

What's crackin'? This is Jon Jon placing some words in your face about my perspective of luck. Some believe it's a false superstition. Others think it's the reason stuff happens to them.

Me, I like using the superstition of luck. But the truth is it's a law of attraction. You pull positively or negativity into your surroundings, like a magnet, except you don't attract the opposite.

When you going around acting a fool and messing shhh up, a boomerang of what you consider bad luck will hit you from behind. When you doing cool and doing good things, good things will happen.

What goes around, comes around, but hit harder. I have a homebody named Mac. He always has cool shhh going good for him. All the homies consider him hella lucky. We even started calling him clover because he attracts luck, like a four leaf clover but really he just cool and laid back. He just handles situations when they comes his way or when we bring them his way.

Me and my canal are now unlucky. It always seems like messed up shhh always happens to us. But in reality, we be messing shhh up for ourselves. Yeah, we'll go out looking for trouble and getaway. But trouble always comes back looking for us to catch us on the rebound.

**-Jon Jon, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** It's like you said, if you're handling things right, good thing will come your way, but it not, then your current situation is the result of your actions. What would change the way your destiny is going? You should try to do things right and see what can come out of it. Give it a shot. Your life situation can change from bad to good.

## **What I Need**

My future is to be a staff at Juvenile Hall.

I have to give up a lot of things like my friends.

Also I have to give up the place I live and go to a good college.

I have to give up a lot in this world

but it's a sacrifice that I need to succeed in life.

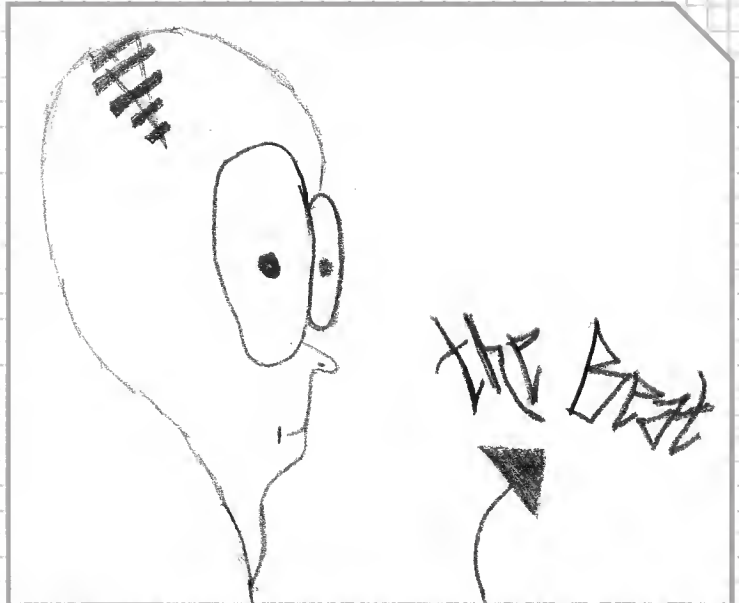
I'm going to do this for me and my family,

the people that I love and need in this world.

What I need is what I'm going to achieve.

**-Lil' Joker, Alameda**

**From The Beat:** It can be really empowering to know that what you need is something you can control. You know how to get to where you want to be, you just have to turn that plan into action. Take that first step now, keep up school, so you'll be able to reach that goal.



## **Sacrifice**

Sacrificing is a very hard thing to do. In my opinion, is extremely hard. I've been incarcerated my whole life, mostly,- and all I've heard is people talking lots of shhh and tons of peer pressure.

Me, being a ward of the state and all my life and I personally sometimes want to blame the government for my failures even though I know it's my own fault. I was put in places where others did drugs, fought and were active gang members. I was raised around that stuff and then people expect me not to except it as a way of life.

I think it was their error in putting me in those environments, but I am also aware that I am 100% responsible for my actions that is something that they have had no control over. My point to all this is that just take responsibility for your actions. I learned that if someone wants to talk their mouth off then let them, especially if you know you can beat their ass.

Drugs be above the influence of others. Just don't sacrifice your life for the negative stuff in life. My whole family is a screw up, but that doesn't mean I have to be one too. Just think about it.

**-Mike, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** Wherever you go, you will witness the same type of environment. But whether you get hooked or not, it's your choice and mistake, like you've said. We understand that growing in an environment full of negativity guided you to be the person you are, but what about now? You're an adult. You have hands, legs, and a brain to do anything you want in life. Now let's turn the page over, what do you think can make your life and choices easier?

## The Struggle

I think the rich wouldn't be able to survive in the shoes of the poor. They wouldn't know about how the poor struggle because they haven't experienced it. They're used to havin' dough in their pockets.

If they lived the life of a poor man for one day they wouldn't be able to take it and they would be ready to return to their old life. If a judge spent a week in jail they probably would stop sentencing young people to jail for so long for misdemeanors and violations.

My family doesn't really know about living poor. I grew up in a family of middle class, my auntie has a decent job. I may not have everything I want but she provides everything I need.

If there is something I want Ima get on my money game and cop that D-game, connive, or work to get it but I will get it! But I don't really know how it feels to struggle. Aight I'm gone...T's up.

**-Juice, Solano**

**From The Beat:** We wish there was a way for people to really understand how others live. Maybe it would be easier to make changes in our communities if we did. We're glad you're motivated to work for what you want!

## Listen...

Street game, street fame. What's it all about? Nothin' but incarceration or six feet under. The thrill is breathtaking, but isn't worth it. I know and everybody else who is doing hard time knows it. It ain't worth a family member's life or your own. I mean who will die for you? Or who will take a sentence of a year or more for you? You're not even going to take the rap for anybody.

Some people do take the rap for their so-called homies, not knowing that the person they took the rap for is out there messing with their mind and emotions. Just know that your only friends is your family. So to the wise, think of your family and yourself before you do something stupid and get put behind bars. Much love to the homies. Late.

**-Saetern, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** It sounds so obvious, so simple, but obviously it's neither since it often takes the harsh consequence to motivate the thinking you're asking everyone to do. But if your words can save even one person from having to experience what you're experiencing, that will be a great accomplishment.

## Unlucky

Right now I consider myself unlucky, every time I get back on my feet I do some thing wrong. It's because of my decisions I make at times like I was post to go home yesterday, but the week before that I wrote something and they said it was "gang related." Every time I do something it always has to do with that. So to every body think twice before you do some thing.

Every time you don't think you will get in trouble you probably will. When my PO finds out what happen this week I hope he won't send me to Fouts or back to the hall. Hope he gives me a break. I'm post to get out soon, in March been here for about 9 months.

I pray it all goes well for me. I don't talk to much people cause I'm going crazy think about snap'n-may snap on you for the simple reason why? That's why I stick to myself. Unlucky.

**-Think'n bout Snap'n, Solano**

**From The Beat:** We know who you are and have carefully edited your pieces for the Beat every week. That piece last week was evaluated before we could edit. This is your last opportunity to give yourself a chance to consider a different life before you are released. You do not need to change your being, your self—but you need to change your actions if you want to have a life! We wish you luck.

## Karma!!!

Man I'm not into luck but I do believe in karma, karma hit me so many times I'm tired of doing wrong, so all I think about is what's going to happen if I do this or that. I believe in karma so much that I help others for it can come back when ever I'm in need.

For example, I was going to the store and there was a guy asking for money, he asked for a dollar and I gave him five, then a couple days later I walked into a store and I was hungry. I just went to use the bathroom, I found twenty dollars sitting on the ground, I was happy, that brighten my whole day.

But karma isn't always good because it hurts you down forever. I remember I was going to a school with a lot of trouble makers, and I wasn't thinking, me and my friends went to take somebody stuff. Then two years later I wasn't thinking of doing nothing illegal and I was going to my uncle house and these other gang members saw me walking, it was close to mid-night, and they ran up on me with a gun. I didn't know what to do. They took my money and everything, but I thank God I wasn't shot-so that was karma too.

**-Cutthroat Ray, Solano**

**From The Beat:** We think it all matters, and that what you think about the world, and what you put out into the world is what you will believe about the world and what you will get back.

## One Person, Many People

Money can buy the world if you have enough of it but money doesn't necessarily bring you happiness, Out in the streets, I made innocent people become victims. Inside I'm hurting going through personal issues.

I stay quiet on how I really feel, but deep down I want somebody to listen.

At night I look at these walls that grabbed me. My heart's aching from all the broken promises, They say for you to love and you will be loved, but that's just to get you to believe in something.

Once you open your heart and it's crushed, it seems you'll never get back that same feeling.

Why even try to find the one when all the ones before were deceitful.

Trying now to have fun, but a big portion of me is missing. Why is life so hard, and how come "why" is always the question no one can always answer.

You can take it step-by-step and still come to the same question.

Guessing won't help, and trying to find it will just lead you to get lost in a sea of letters.

Where did it begin and when will it all end? I'm so tired of living in this illusion.

Voices talking, but none directly to me. My mind says otherwise; now I'm gone into heavy thinking.

I talk back and hear no reply. No one knows what I'm saying.

I speak English, but in a different sense where every time I fall into my own conversations.

Only a few can keep up, but really it's only one with many shadows.

**-Crazy L, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** In a way, we are all many people at different times. But what we find so interesting about this piece is that you make it sound like the various people you find within yourself carry on their own conversations with each other. How does that work? Do you hear different voices? Do your conversations lead you anywhere? What is the illusion you're so tired of living? Are there steps that you can take (or any of your many shadows can take) to make life less difficult, to give you a sense that the future will be easier than the past? We hope that you haven't given up on love, even if your heart has been crushed, because nobody knows what — or who — is around the next corner.



## Sacrifice

Right now all that's important to me is my friends, girls, and getting high, yacked out, and drinkin'. I steal, lie, cheat and hurt people who don't have a fightin' chance. I hang wit' the friends and we always lookin' for a way to get into trouble.

But I'm gonna have to change all of that so I can join the Marine Corps and I'll be forced to sacrifice all that because in the corps they drug test you, and your girls probly gonna warm up to someone else.

You can't workout 22 hours a day if you drink every night, and you can't keep skippin' school or you'll probly blow yourself up—heck you can't even get into the corps without a high school diploma.

And for some reason I don't have a problem given any of that stuff up.

**-Ace, Solano**

**From The Beat:** Interesting that you say you don't have a problem giving up the things that you started out saying were all that's important to you. So why are you willing to sacrifice them for the Marine Corps? Or is it for you, and your future?

## Sacrificing For My Future

First off, I know I gots to give up my "associates." The reason being is because your "associates" are going to bring you down no matter what! Ain't nothing holding me back from this sacrifice. It's already in full effect!

I'm making three types of sacrifices so I could be with my son at all times, instead of being up in JJC. OR 850! Jail ain't got nothing but violence and homosexuality. I ain't involved in neither one! Peace!

**-Nicoya, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** You wrote that you're making "three types of sacrifices," but you only give us one example. What are the other two sacrifices you are making? We hope you get out of here and back with your son soon, because that's where you belong and that's where you want to be.

## Happy Valentine's Day, My Love

Happy Valentines Day, love, to the fullest. No girl will take me from you, so I hope I get the same in return. It's one love, one life, one struggle, so we will get through this. Stay strong.

Also Beat, I been going on OT, so that's been helping me get through these days. Hopefully I get sentenced fast so I could start my time and be out once again living that life I always dreamed of having with a mother who's always there for me, my sweet sisters and nephews right along with my niece.

No one's perfect, but I have realized a lot. I want a lot in life, but I'm the one that gots to be a success to get it — from getting married to my wife Elissa aka Precious, to graduating from college — live the life I always been running from. Well, I should say I got halfway robbed from it.

So Beat, stay up. Plus to the homeboys, do what you got to do and keep your head up high. Don't look back. To my primo Eagle, stay focused on the day you wake up to be strong. Well, time to cut it, but to all, keep a good mind frame on your shoulders. Gone. One love, one life, one struggle.

**-Peanutt, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** We think the life you want — to be a man with a loving family, a decent job, an education — has been more than halfway robbed from you. You may have been running from it, but until you were able to think like an adult, you didn't know what you were running from. Now you're running toward something good, and we know you will get there. In the meantime, we hope you don't forget about The Beat. We want to know what you find at the Y, how your experiences continue to broaden you, and to be able to pass on your wisdom to our many readers.

## If They Could Hang

Can the rich put themselves in the shoes of the poor? HAHAAAAHA! If they could hang. Rich people will never understand of what life is like to live a struggle.

What kind of question is "can rich people learn about the experiences of the poor?" Hell nah they won't learn s\*\*\*.

How you gonna try to learn some with out livin' by it. The only way to know how it's like to live a struggle is by experiencing life as a struggle.

**-Baby, Solano**

**From The Beat:** It's unlikely that many people with money will experience the struggle of poor people. Some believe that people do care about others less fortunate, especially when they know more about what's really going on. What kind of communication might work?

## Lucky Or Unlucky?

Wha's up, Beat? Once again I would like to give much respect to the homeboys out there. This is the homeboy, G, coming at you. Well, today I am going to be writing about luck. I do somewhat consider myself lucky. But, at the same time, I feel not so lucky.

I do feel lucky, because at this moment, I could be dead. Maybe there is a reason why I am in here. I could have died on the outs. But I don't feel so lucky, also, because even though I am alive, I am incarcerated and I am going to be in here for a long time, and I won't be able to see my family and homeboys.

I kind of feel that luck comes and goes. Sometimes things go your way and sometimes they don't, it kind of depends on the situation. The luckiest person I have ever met is probably my grandmother. I think she is the luckiest person, because she made my mom and had a loving family. Even though she is gone, I know she lived a good life.

Well, Beat, I'ma go for now. All right, then.

**-Baby G, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** Do you ever think that luck (or bad luck) comes in groups? You might have a bunch of lucky things happen together, and then you might have a bunch of unlucky things happen. We think you are even luckier than you know because you realize that being in here has some benefits, which leaves you feeling upbeat and positive. That's the kind of attitude that brings good luck with it.

## Until That Day

Who are they to say  
 That I need to change?  
 Who are they to say  
 If they have never felt my pain?  
 How can the rich feel our pain  
 If they have a good house to go to the next day?  
 How can they live our lives  
 If they have never felt locked inside?  
 Maybe one day  
 I won't need to change.  
 Maybe one day we will switch sides.  
 Maybe one day  
 They will realize  
 How everything is slow when it comes to time.  
 Maybe one day  
 The judges will need to change  
 When they're locked up 24 hours a day.  
 Until that day  
 I am stuck in here for 24 hours pain  
 To feel everyday.

**-Angel, FRESNO**

**From The Beat:** Your poem reminds us to treat each other like human beings and empathize before we act or judge. Keep writing, and using poetry to tell your side of the story.

## Are You Lucky

Lucky or unlucky? I think that the difference between the words is obvious. If you're lucky, you get things in life and you succeed if you're not, you end up here with us. Luck is like karma with a different word. If you do good things, good happens to you. And for the bad things you do, you end up with us. Obviously if you want to have good luck, do good, and I'm sure you want god luck. But continue in the bad direction, and you know what happens.

I think the luckiest person or people in the world are the ones who have what they want. And the unluckiest people are us in the max units. Well, not me as much 'cause I only have 12-18 months. But to the others who are doing years, they will always be in my prayers. Much love to all.

**-M Vest, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** Are you using those 12-18 months to carve out a better future for yourself? If you use this time to advance your education, to learn as much as you can about living on the outs without risking your freedom or your life, to build your loving relationships, then you will be a very lucky person, indeed!

## What's Been on my Mind

Comin' back to bein' locked-up has messed with my head a whole lot. With my birthday one week ahead and family problems also got a ninja think bout my master plan that's supposed to keep me out here.

Keepin' my head up at all times not trustin' no females. wit no religious beliefs, dependin' on the fast money coming out the streets, gettin' tired of getting locked up. Only leave a ninja wit a few choices.

Don't want to get a job cause the money they be given away. Tired switchin high schools, they trippin on me smoking, drinkin, and lighting up my Newports getting on my nerves. Dope prices hella high I'm not about to give them what they want. Women aint about shhh these days but givin ninjas a STD, can't be trusted hard to find wifey material.

The system is messed up, waitin to see what Obama going to do. Sometimes I feel glad that I cam to jail cause it gave me time to think bout really getting' on my shhh and that what I'm do and aint nothin' getting' in my way.

Man it's hard to find ninjas like me these days, that's why I know how to keep certain ninjas in my circle cause you can't mess with everybody.

I'll see you when I see you man and best believe I'm make it do what it do. Peace.

**-Brand New 3000, Alameda**

**From The Beat:** One thing Obama has done is made funds available for people to finish high school and go to college. If you do both those things, you'll make more money over your lifetime (than if you didn't—statistically) and you won't have to get locked up! Maybe you should take the GED? (Peace)

## Sacrificing For The Future

I don't know if I'm sacrificing but I'm willing to stop everything that I did in the past that was tearing my life apart and willing to make the path for my future more successful and brighter.

Drinking and smoking on the outs is just tearing my life apart and robbing people and roaming the streets just don't do no good for me.

Listening to my parents will better my future for me because they know what's right for my future.

**-Halatoa, Alameda**

**From The Beat:** How does it feel to be sober and clean for awhile? What do you want for your future? It's good to listen to your parents, and to your self as well.

## 666 For Life

Chorus (X2)

Triple 6 for life triple 6 for life, triple 6 for life

Verse

As a youngster I wanted to hang with the older men.  
I wanted to eat the flesh of my enemies and show no love.

I hated every being because they hated me.

They used to call me Satanloks, and now I throw away that name

Like it means nothing no more.

I used to say, "Forget the east, south, north and west"

And hail Satan 'cause that's all that mattered.

I take it back.

Now I'm down with Christ.

But my best friend still haunts me and will never stop.

I talk to him in my dreams and visions, but never see his face.

I got to keep my enemies closer and my friends out of sight.

I used to be a slave; I used to be a psychopath and

I keep hitting the wall to let the pain go away.

What's there to say? The walls close in

And they put me in the chains of hell.

Why? Why am I a slave? Why am I afraid 'til this day?

Now I'm working towards my future to be a wrestler,

Get a house and a beautiful wife.

I used to be down to sacrifice and torture; now I lost my touch.

I back down too much. It feels like this ain't me no more.

But I feel better, and just feel free.

I used to watch my sisters get beat and never did a thing 'Cause I listened to Satan.

Now I'm free; now I can defend them, fight for their life.

My family's love is the only thing that changed my life,

But I guaranteed that if I never would've changed my ways

I know y'all been dead. Man, I just can't stop. Amen.

Chorus (X3)

**-Moe Joe, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** We're confused by your title, MJ. You make it sound like you're about to salute Satan, but then you write how bad your life was before you let Satan go and gave your life to Christ. We love what you wrote, but think you should consider changing the title.

## Thoughts On Death

Life's hard and than you die. Death is everywhere. That's something you can't escape, something that is prone to happen. I mean, death is not just get hit up. People die all kinds of ways. So when death come for me, my chin up high, hand on my crotch, looking that grim reaper right in the eye. Feel no pity for myself, but for the people I leave behind. I wont be able to feel, or will I? But I know for sure they will, everybody that got love for me.

So for a ninja like me, it's important to live every day like your last, because you never know when death is coming. Life is the greatest gift given, but most overlooked and least appreciated until it is no longer. Death is treated more delicate and most looked at knowing that people look at life after death. When I die, the whole world gone know me. Or will they?

**-Pinky An' The Brain, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** Last month, the writer John Updike died. He left the following poem about death: "It came to me the other day/ Were I to die, no one would say/ 'Oh, what a shame! So young, so full/ Of promise - depths unplumbable/ Instead, a shrug and tearless eyes/ Will greet my overdue demise/ The wide response will be, I know,/ 'I thought he died a while ago./ For life's a shabby subterfuge./ And death is real, and dark, and huge./ The shock of it will register/ Nowhere but where it will occur." Is death the end of everything, or the beginning?



## Life Strange

Wats good Beat this young Nuttso about to get at yall about how life strange.

Life strange because we born to die and the bible give us certain rules to live by like honor thy mother and father. And if you don't you sinning.

But everywhere you go its rules and some people cant really follow rules because they got a mind that say heck rules but life is short and tomorrow aint promise that's why you got to live life to the fullest and stay outta jail feel me-but I'm gone Beat.

-Young Nuttso, Alameda

**From The Beat:** It seems like you're saying that it's more important to realize that we can be grateful for all we have, instead of fighting rules. We think it's important to decide what you're really dedicated to fighting for, thankful that we're able to live to love and know what's important to us.

## Sacrificing For My Future

To make my future better. I'll sacrifice the time I've spent doing wrong things to make them right. The thing that's keeping me from making the sacrifice is being kept behind this wall.

My mom has made plenty of sacrifices to help me become a man, and this is the way I repay her. I'd give up anything for my mom, except for my life because that would hurt her more then anything.

Me and a friend of mine had a saying "To be successful, sacrifices must be made." The other way of saying this is, "Sacrifices must be made to be successful."

-Ballard, San Francisco

**From The Beat:** We often read pieces where the writer proclaims that he would "die" for his mother, which is why we especially like your thoughtful rejection of that particular "sacrifice." [What mother would want her son to sacrifice his life for hers? We can think of none.] We hope you are saving these wonderful pieces and showing them to your mom because, despite where you are and what you have done to get here, we know she must be proud of how much you've matured, and of the future you've now dedicated yourself to achieving.

## Checking In

What's up, Beat? This is your girl, Angel, aka Shay, writing from the girls' unit. I go to court on March 19. I'm ready to see what's going to happen. I might go home or to this transitional house. We shall see. I'm trying to keep my thoughts clear and free of bad shhh that will end me back up in here. I just want to at least graduate from high school and take it from there.

I've been through so much shhh and I'm tired of coming to jail. It's getting played out. Plus, I'm getting closer to eighteen and I can't be getting the D-cases going to 850. Man, I'm just trying to keep my head to the sky, but not in the clouds, ya dig? Your girl trying to make it in life and get out of this poverty. For me, my mom, my dad, and my future kids, I'ma make it. I promised myself I will. I know it's gone take determination, patience, endurance, but I will.

God's got my back, and I know my mom is looking down on me from the sky. But, anyway, that's all for this week. I'll write next week. P.S. I don't ever see my stuff in this Beat. What's up with that?

-Tercha Angel, San Francisco

**From The Beat:** We're not sure why you haven't found your writing in The Beat. If this is an example, it should be seen by all. Keep your goals simple and achievable. Don't try to change everything, just one thing at a time. If you follow through on graduating from high school, so many other problems will be solved at the same time! When you examine your life on the outs, what is the one thing that keeps bringing you back? If you can look at that one most important thing [Drug use? Alcohol? Anger?] and focus just on that, you'll realize just how much you can achieve.

## Lucky Or Unlucky

The luckiest person I ever had in my life was my step dad. If my mom never met my step dad, I would never know how to have manners or know how to be respectful. He taught me a lot of things that I know today. I really miss his ass. But now he's gone. He passed away on 12-5-05. Now I just gotta go on with time. And whatever he taught me I'm going to have to teach his son which is my little brother.

The Unluckiest person... Well, I've met a lot of those people so I'm not going to write about them.

-Ceaser, Santa Clara

**From The Beat:** It warms us to read such a tribute to your stepfather. Mostly we read in The Beat about fathers that abandon their children or, in some way, are selfishly focused on themselves. Your step dad is not really gone because he continues to live in and through you, as you live by the decent things he taught you, and as you pass them on to your own brother.

## Greetings

Well, first, I would like to send my love to all the homeboys that I know and that know me. I will like to send my respect to all the homeboys staying solid. With that said, what's up, Beat? As you could see, I'm Cisco, the real one, the one with real poems. There is another Cisco in the hall, but don't mistake me. I'm the one who rhymes in his poems.

Well, I'm still here, but I'm done with my court situation. I've been in here for a little bit over a year. On January 27th, I got sentenced to ten years. Pretty wack, huh? But to make my matter worse, I have to do my time with two strikes hanging over my head. Now that's some BS. Ten with two was the DA's (from adult courts) plea bargain. I asked for something with one strike, but he wasn't having it. He didn't even take in consideration that I didn't hurt no one. But I can't change what is done. All I could do is stay strong and ask the man up above to help me get through this struggle without catching my third and final strike. I see my situation as if I was punched in the jaw and got knocked out.

Now that I'm sentenced... I woke up on January 29 of '08. I fired a gun at a car with two people in it. Of course it wasn't like an action movie where someone that is about 20 yards away, shoots and hits his target and the car crashes, and all that movie action shhh happens. I shot twice. One hit the car and the other missed and traveled through a restaurant window and into a beverage fridge.

I am so thankful that I'm not here for accidentally murdering an innocent person. You should be thankful for not being at that restaurant and getting a soda.

But, yeah, I took a deal, or should I say, I was forced to take a deal? If I would have taken it to trial, I had about a 70% chance of losing. They were tryna get your boy for attempt, which is stupid, because no one was injured.

Anyways, I'm just chillin', trying to stay away from punks and half-breed wannabees. Well, Beat, Im'a let you go so you could publish mines. To all doing time, look at the brighter side. Also, to all the females in the girls' units, much love, and stay strong and sexy. Because when this gangster walks free, I'ma be looking for a good-looking dime.

-Cisco, Santa Clara

**From The Beat:** Ten years plus two strikes is a big price to pay, Cisco, but when you consider how close your actions came to something far more serious, it's a kind of blessing. We hate when anyone has to go to prison, but at least you won't have the burden of someone's death on your conscience forever, and you will be able to get through this time and start a new life. Develop those "chillin' skills," because state prison is not much better than juvenile hall for being filled with punks and snitches and people without a thought of the future. So, watch your back while you nourish your head and heart. And keep writing!



## Get It How You Live

Get it how you live, is what I was told and now I did it  
my childhood was put on hold,  
when I was stripped of my innocence it was like a loss  
of virginity  
and it took many long years to find my true identity,  
so I turned to the streets to turn a new leaf  
and I found myself being swallowed by the streets,  
when they spit me out I landed in jail  
and that's how I started my new living hell,  
so I pinched myself and it wasn't a dream  
and reality hit and I didn't want to intervene,  
I found out getting it how you live is the naked truth  
but you will never find a ninja that's bulletproof  
I find that life is like baseball,  
three strikes you're out or you could get knocked down  
in these streets and be out for the count  
in these Oakland streets you gotta walk after you've  
crawled  
and if you've accomplished that then you deserve a round  
of an applause  
Life is like a box of chocolates,  
but sometimes you have to receive what you get,  
because tomorrow is not promised to you and your past  
will be a debate,  
so enhance your thoughts and arouse your hands,  
because getting it how you live is more physical than you  
think.

**-Meezy, Alameda**

**From The Beat: You may have walked before you crawled but now your mind is standing tall if you take the thoughts you've had in the hall and stick with them outside then you'll never fall!**

## Younger Kids

The last two times I came here, I've been seeing kids  
younger and younger for crimes more serious than me. I  
be looking at them like, "If I was your big brother I would  
beat yo' lil' ass." I always ask them their situation at  
home, and they tell me it's cool, but I see in their face that  
it's bad. So if you got a lil' brother, pay more attention to  
them before they end up on the wrong path.

**-ER-Daddy-O, San Francisco**

**From The Beat: We wish everybody would think of their little brothers or sisters before they do the things that lead them here. If you don't want you're little brother doing what you're doing, then don't do it! We're curious, though, whether you really think beating their ass would change their behavior. After all, how many times do you think they've already had their ass beat before getting here? Is there any other way to make people think about what they're doing to themselves and to those that love them?**

## Sacrificing For My Future

What's up, Beat? I need to stop twistin' that pizzle. What  
was keeping me from doing it was that I thought it was the  
best feeling in the world, being up in the many galaxies.

The truth is, I've been clean for a month, and it's a  
good feeling. I know what I'm doing. I do miss trippin'  
hard, but I still trip a little.

Tweaking made life at home so difficult. I let my mom  
find out and everything went upside down. My mom did  
sacrifice a lot, too much for me to be hurting her this way.  
We're practically broke because of me.

I have to stay sober. It's a little sacrifice. I'd rather  
sacrifice that, then the love of my jefita. Peace out Beat.

**-Blank, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat: Surround yourself with clean, sober friends and family who want to help you kick this habit. It's going to be hard but like you said, tweakin' isn't half as good as having family.**

## Tears In Mamma's Eyes

Dadadoo! What's good with The Beat, maine? Well, I ain't  
got that much on my mind, so today my topic is being  
locked up. Maine, being locked up is messed up because  
you can't see your girl, your fam, and especially yo' moms.  
Everybody that's in juvenile halls should thank yo' mom  
for supporting you and being there for you when you need  
somebody.

Man, I feel bad because I'm putting tears in my  
momma's eyes because I got locked up. When I see my  
mom cry, then it makes me want to kick somebody's butt.  
So my advice to you is stay out of the halls and keep your  
mom proud. (I love you, Momma!) Everybody in the halls  
keep your head up.

**-Harry Potter, San Francisco**

**From The Beat: When you see your mom crying because you're here, whose butt do you want to kick? Seems like the only butt that needs kicking is yours! But your mom doesn't want you to kick yourself, she wants you to stop doing the things that let the system take you away from her. She wants you to put tears of joy in her eyes, and not tears of pain. So, how are you going to follow your own advice to "stay out the halls and keep your mom proud?"**

## Sacrificing For My Future

Man, the way my life going, I have to give up a lot to  
change my future. I'm seventeen. I'm running the streets  
with all my friends, smoking weed and staying out hella  
late. Things I gotta sacrifice is being with my friends,  
because being with them, I missed out on my daughter's  
life. I felt like I abandoned my one-year-old daughter. She  
barely even like me. To me, I think she love my grandma  
as a mother more than me, 'cause when she cry, she don't  
even come to me. She will run to my grandma before me,  
'cause she barely know me as her mother, 'cause I choose  
to be in the streets than to be at home with my daughter.

To be honest, the only thing keeping me from making  
the sacrifice of not being with my friends is not wanting  
to be at home. I like to be out enjoying myself, but  
sometimes you gotta give up the things you like doing to  
get somewhere in life. For my momma and my grandma,  
I would sacrifice anything for them, because I love them  
and they helped me so much with my daughter, while I  
been a mess up towards my daughter.

**-Priscilla, San Francisco**

**From The Beat: You say you would sacrifice anything for your mom or grandma, but what have you sacrificed for them? In truth, you've sacrificed your mother-daughter relationship because you were too young to have a child. It's not a surprise that you want to be out in the streets with your friends instead of at home with your own child, because you are still experimenting with your own childhood. But you did have a child, so now is the time to put away childish things and step up to your responsibilities. It will not only save your child from what you have had to go through, it will also save you.**

## Lucky Or Unlucky

What up Beat? I'm writing 'bout being lucky or unlucky,  
and if I'm lucky. To tell the truth, luck comes from one  
person. That person creates his/her luck. Say, if a person  
is having a good life or a good time in that moment,  
then they will probably have luck. Like when you're at  
an amusement part and you're having a good time and  
etc. you will probably have luck and maybe find money  
or something, or run into someone that you haven't seen  
in a while.

Some people believe in luck and others don't. But to  
me, luck comes from one. It depends on that person.

**-Brandon, San Francisco**

**From The Beat: We like your idea that when things are going well, or you're having a good time, more good things will happen. Do you think the opposite is also true, that if you're not doing well or having a bad time, more bad things will happen?**



## Luck Or No Luck

Whats up, Beat? This Lil' Shadow. I been up in Alameda County for almost three months. Well I'm 'bout to write about lucky or unlucky.

Well, I consider myself both. I consider myself both because sometimes bad things happen to me and sometimes good things happen to me.

One time I was lucky was when me and my homies hit a lick under a bridge by McDonalds and we got hella weed without getting caught.

One time when I was unlucky was when we jumped some people and somehow he got stabbed and we took his shoes. We got caught 'cause the people I was with snitched.

Being lucky, to me, means to get away with hella shhh, having hella money and hella shhh. Being unlucky, to me, means to get caught when you do something bad. Also, being unlucky when you lose hella money or go to jail.

The luckiest person I ever met was this ninja named Kevin. First he was a bum then inherited hella money. The unluckiest person I might know is me because I always mostly get caught.

**-Lil' Shadow**

**From The Beat:** It's all on you and the choices you make in life. If you make the choice to jump a random guy then you'll have to take the consequences that come along with it. We hope that you take the time to sit down and really think of where you're headed with this lifestyle, a lifestyle that will keep you down and out.

## Sacrificing For My Future

I will have to sacrifice my friends and be by myself because all of the people I hang out with get me in trouble. So I should be with my family and do stuff with them like go to the movies and family things.

I will like to do more stuff with my mom and dad on weekend but sometimes we don't have the money and I just go and do stupid stuff. That's what got me here and hopefully I won't come to jail no more.

**-Yung Rell**

**From The Beat:** Maybe you can talk to your family and suggest that there should be more family time? Being more open with your family can help you to understand each other more.

## She Wait

The best thing that happen to me is when I found Mi Hina. She is the best thing that happen because she is always here for me and always write me and all that good stuff. My lady shorty... she stays true.

**-Trigger**

**From the Beat:** Now you have to figure out how to be the best thing that's ever happened to her too...a free man she can rely on.

## For a Reason

Time goes by but my life is on hold I've got 4 1/2 more month to go. I feel lucky that I've found some body to love me for me.

She's the love of my life we plan on getting married when I get out-7 days before my 18th birthday. She writes me all the time and is at all my court dates.

I don't feel unlucky cause every thing happens for a reason.

**-Mr David**

**From The Beat:** You are lucky to have someone to love who loves you too! What is the reason for the time you're doing now? How will this time help your future? What are you learning?

## Love?

Love. When you say you love someone and they say they love you back, do it make the relationship grow, or does it become harder, or does it mess up your relationship?

Is you scared to tell someone you love them? Is it the same when you tell a homie "I love you" or you tell a girl "I love you" or when you tell your parent "I love you" or is love all the same feeling you get when you truly care about somebody?

**-Moe**

**From The Beat:** These are great questions to ask, Moe, but are you asking for the answers or are you asking your peers to ask themselves these questions?

## Sacrificing For My Future

What I think I need to give up is the way I live my life. What's keeping me from making this sacrifice is mainly because I love living the way I live.

Yes I do want to sacrifice the way I'm living my life for my family, because I want to keep my family and I don't want to leave away from them or lose them ever. My family have gave me all their time, and attention. I'm willing to give up anything that's going to get me in trouble and took away from my family.

**-Michael**

**From The Beat:** Willing to do something and actually doing it is two different things. So what steps do you need to take to make it happen? For you, for your family, and for the love you got.



## Can The Rich Put Themselves In The Shoes Of Poor

I think that the rich, PO's, judges, etc. should put themselves in here so they can feel what we feel. I guarantee that if they come in here they will regret putting some of as in here.

But for the people who have killed, or tried to kill, or committed crimes should stay in here. They don't know what we feel in here and they should provide us with better quality food, clothing, and etc.

**-Anthony**

**From The Beat:** Do you think once a kid or adult kills that that person should be locked up forever? Can they still be a good person?



## RIP Shonnie-Bo & Lil' Mori

Through the years ever since I can remember my ninja Sonnie-Bo been a factor throughout Richmond. He was the type of ninja that played his part to the fullest not fearin' nobody, my ninja gets down. One min he was there in tha hood the next he was dead and gone, got whacked—shhh was terrible.

Lil' Mori was fresh out of Camp Sweeney, came home been out not even six months wit only money on his mind. Just saw him hoopin' in tha hood the next he tellin' everybody he be back. The next thing we know he get whacked by a store clerk, he get hit at least five times, died on a get money mission.

Shhh messed up my young ninjas gone and can't nobody do shhh to bring them back. All I'm sayin' ninjas miss y'all, may y'all Rest in Paradise, love y'all-peace.

**-Brand New**

**From The Beat:** We are sorry for your losses. It's a tragedy that the choices in life your friend's had, and made led them to die so young. We can't afford to be losing young men like you, we need you to be part of the world, our lives and communities. A lot needs to change and we can't keep losing you.

## To Be In My Shoes

A rich person can't put themselves in my shoes, they might get hurt or just kill they self from all the stress and danger. I think I'm a strong dude cause I'm still dealing with all these problems I've been having since I was in the 7th grade. I think if a rich person put his/herself in my shoes they would probably get killed, it's sad to say but it's true and I just learned how to survive through it and deal with the everyday pain.

A sick person would try to use drugs to hide all the pain from being in my shoes. I have some good times in my life, like the money I make, the girls I be with and the great family and friends I have. All the people I find myself with' till this day is SOLID. And that's the type of people I like to be around.

**-Jabari**

**From The Beat:** While you go through tough times, it sounds like you have some great things in your life that some other people (even rich people) might not have. Not everyone is lucky enough to have people who love them and are there for them. We're not trying to say you've got everything easy, but it can be good to be thankful for what we do have.

## Drinking at School

The most lucky thing was that I found 20 dollars in a jacket when I was 10 years old at school looking through jackets kids leave behind.

My sister said I'm not finding nothing, but I did. The most unlucky thing that happened was when I got caught for drinking at school—that's why I'm here.

**-Churro**

**From The Beat:** It's always fun to find money. Why were you drinking at school? Are you an alcoholic? Maybe it's lucky to deal with this now while you are young and have your whole life ahead of you...

## Independently Thinking

I'm lucky in this situation cause I woulda went to jail with my friend that just went down, cause I'm always with him. And while I'm here I feel lucky cause I woulda prolly did sumtang dumb.

**-John**

**From The Beat:** How can you get stronger yourself so that you make decisions based on what you think is right and a good idea, instead of doing whatever someone you're around is doing?

## RIP Uncle Charles, Jerm, Scooter / The Rich

Man last times you didn't show ma RIPs man, that hella disrespect on the real RIP Scooter and Jerm an Uncle Charles.

And naw I don't think they would be able to ever spend a day in ma shoes, it's sick and hella ugly.

**-Lil' Marv**

**From The Beat:** No disrespect. We always ask that people write a testament to those they love and lost—not just a list of names. Tell us about these people, what they were like, what they loved, what you miss.

## Luck

I think I'm unlucky. I say this because it seems like almost every time I do something bad, I end up getting caught. On the other hand, I know other people who do crime on a regular basis and NEVER get caught.

I sit here day-by-day and try to figure out what is so different about me and the other people that I know who get away with crimes and I got nothing. They're definitely not smarter than me by any means. Not "street smart" or "book smart".

Although most of them live in different neighborhoods than me, most people wouldn't do crime in their own hood anyway.

The only explanation I can come up with is that I simply don't have good luck at all. Everything I have, I had to do my own thang to get it. I don't get nothing handed to me from money to females. Maybe not females but from money to other material wants.

**-Sawsaw Young**

**From The Beat:** We all go through times where it seems life is easier for everyone else, that all the bad stuff only happens to us. But if you look around you, we're sure a lot of your peers in the hall feel the same way as you about their bad luck. Everyone has good and bad luck sometimes, but when it comes to getting caught, you can make your own luck better by not doing stuff that you can get caught for.

## Who I Am

I'm someone I thought didn't exist. American Gangstas inspire me everytime I watch the documentaries. I hate suckas and people that's all talk, and the people that thinks marijuana is a drug.

I believe there's no love in this world and that you can not trust nobody that don't trust you (and I mean trust you with they house keys trust).

I also feel that someone needs to do something about our messed up system.

**-Brand New 3000**

**From The Beat:** What do you think marijuana is? And we find it hard to believe you have no love—and therefore there's at least That much love in the world...We agree that "someone" needs to do something about many things, including the "system." What can you do?

## Certain Lessons

I don't really believe in good or bad luck. I believe in god, he has things happen for a reason to teach you certain lessons about life like when new born babies die.

I think he lets people know that they're not ready for parenthood...I believe life is hard that gets you the wrong way most of the time if not everytime, but you still have to deal with her cause you need her.

**-Been Rough**

**From The Beat:** When some things happen, like when babies die, it's very hard to understand. We don't think the "reason" is ever to punish or reward, but like you say—to learn about life and death, and love and God.



## Being Top Citizen

I like being top citizen. It makes me feel good to know that I'm being a good person and doing the right thang up in here.

Plus it's helping with my court 'cause they not seeing me as a bad ass little ninja ...they saying "oh okay, he got another side to him and he ain't just a heartless ninja." So I'm going to a group home.

I can't wait to get out of here!

**-Leon**

**From The Beat:** Congratulations - you were in the hall, and you saw something you wanted to do to make your life better, and you made it happen! That is a "good side" to you, a side that can help you survive in the future. What can you do build on this success in your next placement?

## Lil' Mama

Lil' mama see time you see me jocking

You got me stalking

Think about jocking

I got you an my life you can't stop me

We going shopping and buying the thangs you jocking

I remember like it was yesterday

I was down and you picked me up

And you was special

At first was scared to talk to me

Until I got out the car an' told you walk with me

And we was going head to head

You got my mouth watering like the candyman

Lil' mama you seeing time you see me walking

You got me jocking thinking about stalking.

**-Casey**

**From The Beat:** We hope that when you get you have a chance to treat your girl right, and stay out of jail!

## Still Alive

I don't consider myself lucky or unlucky because both have happened in my life. I'm not dead even though I've been stabbed a few times. I guess I've been lucky about that but right now I don't have my freedom. Just like the five times I've been here before.

Combined to all the six times I've been here I've lost three years of my life. I do believe in karma, what goes around comes around. Cause I've robbed people, sold drugs to kids younger than me, so I guess this is my karma.

The luckiest person I know is a friend of mine. I've know him all my life in Oakland. He's been shot, stabbed, beat, hit wit a car and he's still alive. He's got a lil' baby girl and I'm her Uncle. So I guess I lucky about that u feel me.

**-Doughboi**

**From The Beat:** It sounds like you like being an Uncle! Stop giving away your time to jail. If you believe in karma, how can you put out what you want back?

## Panic

If the rich were in my shoes they sure enough panic, I'm so wild they think I'm schizophrenic and naw I'm not lucky, unless I had a woman member I was young ninjas tried to jumpy play with luck cause it's all in the mind I'm mobsta one of a kind.

**-J**

**From The Beat:** Time to play your good luck.

## Life

If you live to win, you're going to lose, but if you live to enjoy life you will win.

**-Fat Boy**

**From The Beat:** This is short and sweet.

## Stressed

I can't believe that shhh homey.

It's all bad enough I got all this

shhh going on on the outs but now I'm locked down and I'm stuck

stressing about it. Some real warfare type shhh going on in the hood

right now, plus my charges and all this court shhh, I got a female

pregnant, family problems and the stress this all causes.

But all I

can do is maintain and keep it solid you feel me.

**-Demon**

**From The Beat:** Too much stress! We're glad to see that you are trying to stay positive despite everything going on at home. It's good you wrote about it for The Beat - you keep all that inside and it can eat you up.

## Sacrificing For My Future

I'm willing to give up my hustle to stay free.

I'm willing to give up robbing and other things I do as a negative hustle. I would do so because I'm big 18 and I'm ready to take that next step towards the positive path, and experience the college life and college parties, but I got news, only I can change me and I'm in progress.

I would say that my upcoming temptation would be girls, money, and drugs why do I say this? Because those three things named, would be a big temptation because it is a deadly combination and will make you a nervous wreck and can cause you to self-destruct.

**-Big Temptation**

**From The Beat:** It's good that you recognize the things that are temptations hopefully you can stay away from them and resist the urges. Maybe if you find that one girl who is on a positive path, and a job to get you legit money, it will help you resist temptation.

## I'm Lucky

Every day has some luck.

I thank God for letting me open my eyes eveyday and I'm lucky for that. I'm lucky my judge didn't give me the whole eight. I'm lucky the judge and my PO is giving me another chance to walk the streets. And when I get out I have to make a change.

**-Patrick**

**From The Beat:** Step 1: Appreciate your luck, which you've done. Step 2: Make your own luck - meaning once you get out, be careful what decisions you make about what you do on those streets!

## Lucky Me

I am lucky because god blessed me and my case because I'm doing 8 months in here till I turn 18 then I'm tryna do 4 to 6 months in Rita but god really blessed me and I hope he continue to bless me.

And if I get my 2nd chance I'm gonna take care of my two sons and go to enroll in college and get anotha job.

**-Freeway**

**From The Beat:** We're glad you feel blessed! Here's another reason you're lucky: Obama has dedicated money to help more people go to college— you are just in time. Think how great it would be for your sons if you go to college.

## If There's a Sun Let it Shine

It's like the same thing keeps on happening. I fall, I get up, I fall again and continue to get up. It seems that I probably don't get the point that one more fall and I might not get up again.

It all happens when I'm locked up that I notice all these things. It seems like I realize all my mistakes by being in between four walls and a steel door. It's so easy to see sunshine while you on the outs but just so hard to let it shine on you and I wait to be in here to realize all of the good stuff while I'm in here.

But I get it and that's what matters. If there's a sun, let it shine as bright as it wants you won't notice when all that light is gone and that's when it's too late. Surviving is the clue.

-M

**From The Beat:** Great piece written with lots of heart. Sorry we had to shorten your name to just M (we're not allowed to print last names in the hall). Give us another name to use so we can let your light shine!

## God Bless My Ninjas

God gives me D-Scrilla back for 24 hours  
So we could mob in a rental car like it was ours  
hit the block bra smoke and sip bo' for hours  
Show him how some of our real ninjas done went sour  
Plus the girls on the block getting wilder and wilder  
The gunfire ain't stopped bra  
It's louder and louder yo' legacy live on my ninja  
I'm getting prouder  
I used to be a hot boy but now I'm getting milder  
A ninja doing jail time but ain't forgot about ya  
wish you was still here can't do it without ya  
God bless Laron he on a timeout  
and please watch over Dolo until he shined out  
I know we did a lot of things in this past year  
over jail time you can stress but I won't shed a tear  
lost my auntie to a stroke just a week ago  
plus my potna got shot  
again but he made it though  
we was out hustling hard just to get the dough  
a ninja made it through the rain just tryin' to survive the snow

(Chorus four times)

God bless my ninjas baby, yeah, yeah, yeah  
I know I ain't been good so God bless my ninjas  
'Cause it be hard for the kid surrounded by killers  
Everybody wants to be a thug in these streets  
But where I'm from shhh ugly gotta hustle to eat  
That's why I'm praying to you God  
That you reach out and help us  
It seem like the rich folks getting richer and selfish  
Show us all the right ropes guide us through the maze  
It's ninjas out there starving who ain't ate in days  
watch over all the youngsters as they grow of age  
who rather load up a gun before turning a bible page  
bless the young lil' sick one who dying of AIDS  
free my ninjas out the jail who got caught in the raid  
show that girl that's tryin' to get in the club underage  
help the ones with anger so it don't turn to rage.

(Chorus four times)

God bless my ninjas baby, yeah, yeah, yeah.

-Lil' Purp

**From The Beat:** This time you add a new dimension to all the skills you've been developing as a writer over time: Compassion. It's a mark of artistry and also shows how much you've grown as a person. You're not growing milder, just smarter.

## Three Topics, Three Answers

1. To change my future I might have to give up being lazy, smoking and being careless. I'm not feeling like I have to, even though I know I'm going to have to. When I think of my mom sacrificing all the fun she used to have it makes me feel like there's nothing I would do for her.

2. I think rich people would be very grateful if they spent a month on food stamps. If DA's PO PDs and judges put them selves in certain positions maybe they'd try to understand situations more before they lay down a big sentence on someone who didn't really deserve it.

3. I consider myself lucky for everything I have even though it's not much, just because I've seen how a lot of people live and I'd be stupid to say I'm unlucky. Unlucky: Someone who had something's happen to them that they didn't deserve.

Luck: If someone got something they didn't earn or need or you could be lucky to get something that not everyone has or that a lot of people wish they had. People don't always get what they deserve and they don't always deserve what they got.

-Matt

**From The Beat:** Wise insights all the way through, next time focus all your energy on the one topic you like the best, that way you can go deep and develop your ideas some more.

## 200 Days

I been in this thing for 200 days and some change.

My release date is in four months, and I feel good because I am getting out real soon. It feel like I been here for years...seen people come and go a couple times, and that's why it feel like I been here a long time.

Kay gave me a juvenile bullet... and for you slow learning cream puffs that's a year in juvenile hall I turned 18 in here he wanted me to go to Santa Rita . But I been doing a good program, so my public defender recommended I do my program in the hall, and now I am sitting here doing my time by these lil' kid rules but I ain't trippin' though.

I feel God put me here to slow me down some cause I was really wilding out but when I get out I'm gonna try to change

-Stan Da Man

**From The Beat:** You only got a lil' more time left to go. Keep your head up. Hopefully you learned something from doing all the time locked up. Don't mess up again when you get out.

## Have A Plan

What is good Beat, this is your boy Michael, coming at you from the honor unit at Alameda County Juvenile Hall. I am writing to all my ninjas out there, you all need to look at your life. Do you want to be locked up your whole life or do you want to die? Stop doing what you are doing.

See me, I am going to stop. I have a plan, and my plan is to go back to school get a job, go to a college become a diesel mechanic for Santa Clara County VTA. I have a plan and I will stick with it. I get out in April that is when I am going to start my plan.

To all, keep your head up stand tall and stay strong much love and respect.

-Michael

**From The Beat:** It's great that you have such a clear goal. What are the obstacles you see in your way, and how do you plan to overcome them?



## Oakland Streets

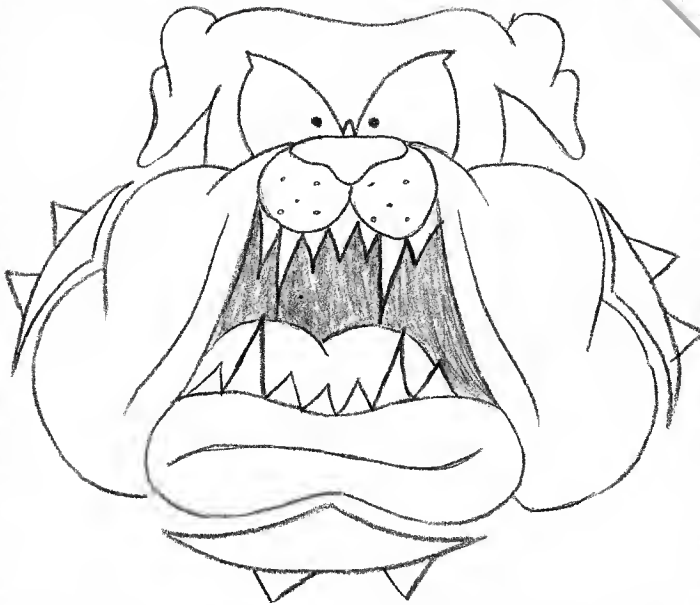
... is where I grew up, I've lived there basically my whole life. I never really sold no drugs but that really don't mean nothing, I'm happy I never had to sell drugs.

My father is a hard worker and I never had to break the law because my dad kept food on the table. I really didn't have to do anything bad but I chose to.

Where I'm from everybody else was bangin' their block so I started bangin' because that's were I'm from.

**-Lil Boobie**

**From The Beat:** When you think of the people who grew up with you who didn't bang...what did they do? You'll need to think on how some are able to stay away...so you don't get caught up again.



## Answers on Two of the 14.10 Topics

1. I think there are a lot of things a man will have to give up to change his future as life goes on it will never stop! You will always have to sacrifice something in order to get something!

My parents made a big sacrifice for me every visiting day they come and see me! They are sacrificing their time to visit me here and I am very thankful for that!

I sacrifice not smoking weed for the time that I'm in here now am clean 'cause I been here for a month I don't think weed and bad as long as you don't disrespect it! But now think I can get a job now a good one without worrying to find some clean piss.

2. Yes I think he will have a better understanding because he is experimenting to see what I would be like. Now if the DA or PD was in our shoes in ail I think they would like it at all! They will learn that being locked up will make you crazy. I think they will keep locking teens up, but for a less amount of time maybe!

But being in the hall also messes up your mind 'cause when you get out you're going to want to go out more and that might get you into some messed up shhh! Or just the cops might just mess with you for one reason.!

**-Jorge**

**From The Beat:** You bring up a lot of good points in this piece, especially about the sacrifices our loved ones make for us, and the need for powerful people in the system to understand where young people are coming from - but we also want to ask you about that last point. What are some other things you could do with your time on those nights you might want to go out and get in trouble?

## I'm The Lucky One

The luckiest person I've ever met is myself because I got away with a lot of robberies and fights in school and I mostly never get caught with that.

The unluckiest is my cousin because he used to get robbed, went to the hall and the pen, then when he got out he had got shot.

His name was Sione Maha.

He was a person who was strong by lifting weights, but people had guns to rob him, so it don't matter how strong you are when it comes to guns.

**-Jacob**

**From The Beat:** We're sorry to hear about your cousin - especially because it sounds like he struggled so much throughout his life. Do you think it was because of getting robbed so much when he was little that he ended up getting involved in crime?

## The Real Choice

Friday need to hurry up come so I could see what they got to say to me it might be good it might be bad, but I got faith in the lord so he would be the one who makes the real choice.

Can't nobody judge me but the lord. Not the judge, D.A, nobody that's why I don't care what people say to me. ON MAMAS

**-Lil' Rolo**

**From The Beat:** We know these times have been rough for you, and yet we also know that you are a good writer, and someone who wants to do right. We hope you can find the strength in your mind and heart to live through your time, and become the man you can be! We think you can do it.

## Thank You

I would like to thank The Beat for this program. It gives young people a chance to freely express themselves in a positive way.

By reading several issues of The Beat I have learned a lot from what others have wrote. I think The Beat is an amazing creative writing program. I appreciate the chance to get in The Beat.

**-B**

**From The Beat:** You are very welcome, B. What are the some of the things you've learned from tThe Beat? Do you have a favorite Beat writer?

## Lucky And Unlucky

I don't got nothing to say but I think I'm lucky and unlucky.

I think I'm lucky 'cause I got a good mother who take care of me. Also, because she comes to visit me and comes to my court dates when she really don't got to. Another reason is because she do what ever she could do to keep me out of trouble.

I think the reason why I'm unlucky is because I got a bad environment. Another reason is I been in out of jail six times in one year and I'm only twelve.

I think I could do better if I really want to but it's something that's stopping me. I don't know what is it. It just seem like every time I come in here I just be a kid. On the outs it's like something that's making me do bad but I don't know what it is, but I think I should just live my life instead of going down the wrong path.

It's like every time I got to duck blue and red lights.

**-Lil' Smashin**

**From The Beat:** You're right, your mother doesn't have to have your back and care the way she does but she does it anyways. You're her son, her flesh and blood do you think this is what she wants for you?

## Lucky or Unlucky

Do I consider myself lucky or unlucky? Um, I think both I'm lucky in many ways, like what family I came from. I have an amazing family I came from we all "go" (means cool). They all taught me a lot in the world and more to come to teach and were always there for me in anything.

Then it goes my "bruh's" (friends). Some of them been there for me through whatever. We steady mobbing with them everywhere, boyee! They always had my back but some didn't, they was never down and never "active" and that's how I'm unlucky and lucky.

-Juice

**From The Beat:** Do you think the situation you're in right now is unlucky, Juice? Do you think you can change your luck by just keeping it straight and staying out of trouble?

## These Streets

I don't think you can just get anyone and throw them in these streets. They just won't survive like us, who just get enough food so they can make it through. The days are hard, it's stressful for us when we get shot at and the police don't let us just live.

I have so much things I have to do, I have to go to school with no food to eat then after school I gotta grind. I put my life in danger every day by just steppin' out that door.

That's why we get caught with guns. It's because we, ourself, have to be the police. Lookin' everywhere front, back, side to side, just to make sure that I can see another day.

-Jahfanie

**From The Beat:** It's tough on the streets and either the public turns a blind eye or they don't care. There are people who care but there's only so much they can do because they're struggling too.

## Change for My Daughter

The things I need to give up to change my future, to make it better is hanging with the wrong crowd of people. Wanting to be outside so much is what's keeping me from making that sacrifice.

Right now I'm willing to give up a lot for my future daughter. Three months from now I plan on being a father. I plan of taking care of my baby the best way I can. So when I get out of here I'm gone give up hanging out with my friends, so I could be there for my family.

-DeVaughn

**From The Beat:** Having a child, full of love and innocence, can help motivate you to make that change. Think about it - you want her life to be better than yours has been, right? So what are the concrete steps you will have to take?

## Beef

This beef shhh is crazy not knowing if you're going to see the next day worrying about getting shot having to watch yo back everyday every minute of everyday having to worry about my family... it's just crazy out on the streets.

But in here you don't have to worry about guns or dying from bullets, the most you have is if a lot of your enemies is in here you can get jumped, but its not as crazy as on the streets-then when u in beef and you have your gun on you you have to worry about the police. You can go to jail or they can kill you. Beef is just crazy.

-Young Boobie

**From The Beat:** It sounds terribly stressful no matter where you are. What's the solution to this craziness?

## This And That

My life is about this and that.

Dodging the read and blue.

Sometimes I wish it would be easy

But my dream disappears when I hear screams.

Population 400,000

But most of it the population you see is

Thugs, hoes, crack heads, and people

Suffering from the shhh that goes on.

Why can't it be easy?

-Cash

**From The Beat:** We wish that we could just wave a magic wand and change the horrible conditions in our neighborhoods but it's not that easy. You never know, this poem could start the movement to reform our hoods! Nice work!

## I Have To Give Up Hanging With My Friends

What do you think you have to give up to change your future, to make it better? I think I have to give up hanging out with my friends in the streets. I think if I give up most of my friends I can study more and get a good education, and not be in the streets causing problems and stuff. Being with my family, going to church once a week. Nothing will keep me from making that sacrifice.

My mom has given all her life to raising me as a good child. I am willing to give up most of my friends that put me into trouble. I think that will make me have a better future.

-Genaro

**From The Beat:** Giving up your friends is indeed a big sacrifice. But if you know it will help your own future, it's an important step towards making the right choices for yourself.

## I'm Blessed

I don't believe in luck I believe that either you're going to be blessed or not blessed. People are chosen by the way they live their life. I always use to think in luck but not no more.

God has a life for you and if you are living your life right then God will bless you. He isn't gonna get you luck. He's got to bless you. Everyday I wake up by being blessed I don't take it for granted but I just trying to live my life right.

Hope all y'all be good and stay blessed. Wake up and don't forget to thank God.

-Marqise

**From The Beat:** Do you believe that everyone is born blessed by God, or do they become blessed once they've chosen a life path? And what happens when someone lives a negative life for many years, and then they change halfway through?

## Sacrificing For My Future

I think I should give up skipping school to change my future. If I start going to school I can have a better future, even though I hate school. I'ma just finish high school and then I'm done, that's it.

I started out skipping classes then later on I started getting caught and I said to myself, "If I don't go to school the whole day I wouldn't get caught no more." But all that is going to change now once I finish freshman year in Camp Sweeny.

When I am a sophomore that is when I'm a start 'cause I can't go back home yet.

-Tony

**From The Beat:** That's a great start, but what will you have to do to make sure you don't start slipping again? You're young and you have room to mess up but what's the point if it lands you in the hall, right?



## I Consider Myself Lucky

I consider myself lucky because when I got in the high-speed and then the car crash they said I should've been dead, how the car came out to be, but God had my side and I ain't doing that stuff again. That wasn't a good decision but since I been in jail I'm going to be wiser.

I'm not getting in no more trouble 'cause jail is hecka boring and now that I'm getting out on 2-2-09 I got to do what I got to do to be successful in life and I'm going to church, home, and hanging with my family. Forget the block where it's hot, it ain't cool like that no more.

The stuff that's going on is 'bout to be more than ever 'cause people 'bout to try to beat the violence record from last year. If they didn't make the violence papers showing how many people got killed every year the violence wont be that high, it wont even be like this. But if they stop making those a lot of people going to have they life 'cause it's 2009 and people 'bout to start dying 'cause the newspaper people keep telling the world how many people got killed and stuff and they need to stop the violence.

**-Chapman**

**From The Beat:** You're right, we wished that the media would use their stories for good, to help the communities but it seems like it's just another story to them. Maybe you can go to school for journalism and do some justice to the stories floating out there?

## Sacrificing For My Family

Me I'm willing to sacrifice going out in the streets late at night. I'm willing to do that for my parents so that they won't be worried that something is going to happen to me.

I'm also willing to sacrifice my friends that are bad influence to m. the reason that I'm willing to do that is, because I love my family and I'm going to do anything to make my family really happy.

**-Rigoberto**

**From The Beat:** Are there other friends in your life that are more positive, people you could turn to that might help you take those steps towards change?

## My Mom's Sacrifices

I think mom has made a lot of sacrifices for me. She has raised me and my two brothers by herself, working hard for the years that I remember. I feel like I should sacrifice things for her too.

I feel bad that I am in here and can't help her do anything, but when I get out I will sacrifice what I think I should to have a better future for me and my mom who has sacrificed so much for me.

**-Jesus**

**From The Beat:** What are you willing to sacrifice for your mom, and for your own future? What will be hard to sacrifice?

## Rich People Are Ignorant

Hell naw, rich people can't put themselves in the shoes of the poor.

Why? Because rich people would never even stop to shop at Walmart.

Rich people are ignorant because they think poor people are not

considered humans, but "they are animals" (They say)

**-Sad Boy**

**From The Beat:** Do you think that reading The Beat, or talking to a person without money, or seeing a movie about poverty might help a rich person see the other point of view? Have you ever personally experienced getting looked down on by someone with money? What happened?

## My Parents

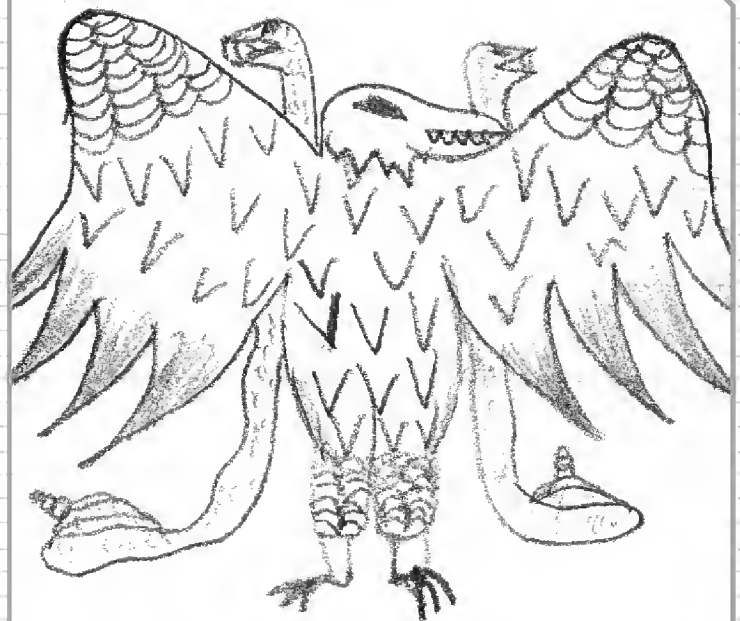
I think some people sacrifice themselves for other people, like how my parents sacrifice their lives for me and my brothers by working and giving us a better life.

I think I owe my life to my parents and I'm very thankful for them for giving me a better life and sometimes I think I let them down by being in here and that's what makes kind of sad.

When I get out of here I'm going to do my best to not come back in here because I really do miss my family and friends.

**-Aaron**

**From The Beat:** Are you willing to make some sacrifices of your own, to ensure that you don't come back? What are they?



## Dwelling and Reminiscing

It was October 31st, the year of '07

Them ninjas, they slid through and sent my cousin Bill to heaven

He didn't have nothing to do with that block shhh

But they still let him have it

I'm talkin' about a full clip

I was on the block that night in front of my uncle's house

It was me and my ninjas

But we had seen 'em first 'cause they ridin' slow in a van

They drove up to the liquor store and they was goin' fast

Next thing you know I seen Bill from a block away

And then they let it rain, doors open,

And I would've been dead too if I would have stayed up the block Now I'm dwelling and reminiscing, I could've got shot.

Rest In Peace Bill Ray Taylor

We miss you.

**-Lieutenant Alley Bo**

**From The Beat:** This is a beautiful and raw tribute to your cousin's death. So many innocent people get caught between the crosshairs because we've turned our streets into a war zone and they're getting caught in between. This fight for power will soon tear apart our communities beyond repair. What do you think we could do, as a community, to strengthen our kids and streets against this type of violence?



## I Need To Say, "Forget All This!"

What's good with The Beat? Me, shhh keep my head above water, hoping the sky don't fall, ya feel me? But y'all asking what do I think I have to give up to change my future to make it better? I need to stop selling drugs, robbing people, fighting, just basically this whole lil' hype movement.

I need to really just calm down and get back into the books, instead of worrying about what's going on and the streets. I just need to go back to the old Brittany and say, "Forget all that other shhh" and just do what I know what's right and get me a job, and be in the house by a certain time. The only thing that's keeping me from making this sacrifice is I like fast money, even though fast money leave fast. But I can't help it. I just love to have the finer things, feel me? I mean, that's what's really stopping me. Hell, yeah.

My mom made hella sacrifices for me and she still do. One sacrifice that my mother made for me is when she gave birth to me. Something could have happened during her giving birth to me. To keep it real, I give my life back to my mother.

So, yeah, that's a lil' something I just wanted to drop down on paper. So, yeah, I'm out. Love, your girl, Bri. I'm out here. Man, get with it or get lost, 'cause I'm a boss.

-Bri

**From The Beat:** The one thing you seem unwilling to sacrifice for your mother is that child's attitude, "I can't help it." Of course you can help it. There were many times when your mom wished she could be doing something she wanted to do instead of taking care of you, but she made her desires second to yours. She doesn't want you to give your life back (why would she go through all that trouble to have you if she wanted you to give it up), she wants you to be the responsible young woman she saw in you as she was raising you. You know exactly what you need to sacrifice, both for your own advancement and for your mother's peace of mind. When you reach maturity, you will do it! Just don't wait too long...

## Word Of Advice!

What's up with The Beat? This Young Life, ya know? But, man, all you cats that's trying be hard and carry guns, just stop while you got a chance! You ain't ready for yo' mama to be walking out that big-ass church, when all yo' people cryin', hollerin' 'bout, "Why you had to take my son?" That's what them choppas 'bout, is you 'bout that boy!

-Yung Newt

**From The Beat:** Why is your piece so similar to C's piece called "Stop Talking"? We're not sure which one of you copied from the other, but when we read the same words in two different pieces, it makes us suspicious of both writers. So, don't use others' words as your own, and don't let others use your words as their own!

## I'm Sick In The Mind, Ya Heard?

What's good with The Beat? This the Young Life back strap. Man, it's so phony up in the Ranch. I'm missing the females right now, and my ninjas. We do the same shhh every day up here — eat the same food every day, talk about the same shhh.

I miss my freedom, my moms, my sis, my family. I'm tired of all this. Something got to be done. My head is spinning. I'm stressing. I feel invisible. I'm going ill, but I gotta go.

-Yung J Newt

**From The Beat:** How tired of this are you? Are you tired enough to make some changes when you touch down so that you won't have to suffer through this again? We can understand why you'd rather be home than here, but what would make being here a better experience for you? What could they do that they are not doing already that might better prepare you for a life of freedom on the outs? Are you using your time to think about how to stay out? What conclusions have you reached?

## Money, Weapon, Woman

That's all a ninja need, fo' real. Me, man, I got to do me. That's just who I am. So if you ain't my hype, get wit' it before I get on ya head. Get active!

-Grimey

**From The Beat:** Seems like you need one more thing besides the three you named: freedom! Without that, all the money you make is going into the system's pockets, the only weapon you have access to is your mouth, and as for women... well, only in your dreams!

## Word Of Advice

What's up wit' The Beat? Man, this CB, ya heard? I'ma let y'all know that when ninjas go to jail and they gotta do more than a year, they might as well off-top know that they girl getting flipped. Man, you can't trust them girls. They unfaithful and weak-hearted.

Being in jail really ain't coo' because if I didn't do what I did, I would be out with my female, cuddled up in bed and chillin'. Damn, I need to get out. I miss my girl and my thugs.

-C

**From The Beat:** Aren't you the one that's being unfaithful? After all, if you get yourself locked up, then you left her first, she didn't leave you! Why should a girl wait around for you when you weren't thinking of her when you put yourself here? Do you think getting yourself locked up makes you "strong-hearted"? We combined your two pieces because they were too much alike.

## The Rich Have No Clue

Hell no, the rich can't put themselves in the shoes of the poor. I have friends that are rich and who talk about some stuff they don't even know. Most of the rich girls that I meet normally think I'm a wannabe "black" or something stupid like that because they're just used to their racist things they know.

Rich people ask me all the time why I be this, why I be that, and I tell them, and they don't get it because they don't have these problems. Rich people don't know what it's like to come home and have no food to eat for days to a week at a time. They always have food on the table. A poor man has to worry about so much, like paying something like a cell phone bill.

-Ricky

**From The Beat:** Do you think poor people could be helped if the rich had to sacrifice their riches for a period of time — say a year — and have to live on food stamps in the projects. Or, do you think that by the time we are adults, our ideas are already fixed and can't be changed by new experience? What do you think rich people worry about?

## My Racism

I wasn't feelin' none of the topics, so I'ma write about racism, feel me. I hate when I get on the bus and them others be tuckin' they purse and people be callin' the police all the damn time. Plus, the Mexicans be always callin' me the "N" word.

But me, I'm very racist. I talk about every race and I'm not ashamed of it, because when I talk about white people, it's payback for when they enslaved us; and Asians because they always act like they know karate but they don't; and the Mexicans think they sick 'cause they in gangs. Either way it go, I don't like white, yellow or Mexicans' color.

-Angry Black Man

**From The Beat:** It's terrible that you have to hear those ugly racist words thrown around. But if you respond to racism with racism, what does that change? Since very, very few of us are "pure" anything, what would you do if you found among your ancestors some whites, some Asians or some Latinos? Would that change your view of yourself? Have you ever imagined what it would be like to be another race?



## Can The Rich Put Themselves In The Shoes Of The Poor?

Man, Beat, when I seen this topic, I was just laughing in my head. This is a stupid-ass topic. No offense to the person that came up with it. It's just stupid in its own way. Can't no rich person put theirselves in a poor person's shoes. They gon' die before the day is over with. They don't have the survivor skills like the poor do, so they wouldn't make it. That's just like saying George Washington—you put him in my shoes or some other people's shoes like us—imagine that.

But, yeah, I'm out. I'm still loving my haters, because they know we out here and we got many of haters just make my ice on my neck shine even more. I'ma do something good for my haters today, God help me with tomorrow.

**-Queen Bee**

**From The Beat:** You may be right about the rich not being able to survive what the poor have to survive, but human beings are very adaptable. Have you ever heard of the story, "The Prince and the Pauper"? It's by Mark Twain, and it tells the story of what happens when a prince changes places with a poor boy. Both of them have to make some major adjustments.

## Your Daddy Loves You

What would I sacrifice for you?  
Would be anything to keep you,  
Everything,  
And the impossible things,  
Just to make you see,  
That your daddy loves you,  
And for you always be  
I just don't got much to say  
Today, so I will be back again  
But all I wanted to say,  
Is that I love you Lavelle  
And for you I will do anything  
Just to see a smile in your face  
And to make of your future the best  
Just 'cause I love you so

**-Lavelle**

**From The Beat:** It is touching to read each week of your overwhelming love for your daughter. We only hope that when you get out of this situation, you don't do anything to put your freedom in jeopardy. Words of love are great, but you need a real relationship with your daughter, and she needs a real relationship with her daddy.

## Every Project Is Beefin'

I wish teenagers claiming they 'je'ts would all be coo' 'cause hella of these kids is dying at a young-ass age. Every Project is beefin'—Potrero Hill, 6th Street, GG Boys, North Beach, Jackson Boys, Sunnysdale, Harbor, West Point, Kirkwood, Lakeview, Quesada, Hollister, Palou, Shafter, Gcolu, Shorview, OC, The muck, 800, Westside, The O, Tp, Ko, Russia block, E-mob, VG's, Oakdale, Alemany, Double Rock, Tower block, Holly Courts, 16th, 18th, 19th, 20th, 21st, 22nd, 24th, 26th, 30th, Army Street, Page, Hayes Valley, Bishop block, even ninjas from the Aves. You just gotta think about why are we doing this when we could be doing things to be making us rich as hell.

**-Tall Dude**

**From The Beat:** Well, you got in every street, 'hood, 'je't, and turf in the city! When you say you could be out there making money, what did you have in mind? Isn't the search to make you rich what leads too many people to places like this? The best way to make yourself rich is to finish school, prepare for a career, and start stacking your chips slowly, little by little.

## Living In The Shoes Of The Poor

I think that the news reporter might understand a little better, but he won't completely know how it feels to be poor. They won't know completely because he knows he has money to go back to. Also he didn't have to grow up poor and experience poverty and gang violence or drug abuse at a young age.

**-Forest**

**From The Beat:** We agree with you. He might be able to learn something, but he can never truly understand what real poverty is because he knows he can escape from it. What about the other part of the question? Would it help if judges, POs, DAs and PDs had to experience a little jail time?

## Don't Get Trapped

Live life to the fullest. Don't hold back.  
Make millions and never look back.  
Do it right so you don't get trapped.  
But if you a youngsta, you can afford one minor setback.  
One's enough but you don't need that.  
Always remember mo' money mo' problems.  
So take it how you want it...  
You want money wit' problems or no money without.  
Choose! It's up to you, but never forget live life to the fullest  
Whichever is best for you, and I'm gone fast.

**-Mo' Money Mo' Problems**

**From The Beat:** Well, you've laid out the choices, but you haven't given us a hint of which one you'll choose. If you plan to take the "no problems" alternative, what's your plan for when you get out of here in order to stay out of here?

## Going Back To It

Dadadoo! What's good, mayne? I'm just in this thang waitin' till I go to court again. But it's most likely they goin' waive my time again to another month. It's good, though. I'ma do all my time, but when I get out, I'ma be on shhh, all blacked up, ya'msayin. But I'ma try and be smooth about it though, so I want get locked up.

**-Jerry Geez**

**From The Beat:** We don't care how "smooth" you think you're going to be, JG. You can dress in black, creep around the 'hood, do "your thing," but you won't be smooth enough to avoid the consequences, unless you think you're that much smarter than the 200,000 other people in California prisons who, like you, thought they could do it smooth...

## Two Kids

Man, what's good with this Beat shhh? Me, just being this 100% real ninja I was born to be.

But man, I just had a boy and 'bout to have a girl. Man, this life shhh a trip. I would say the "B" word, but even they got feelings, and this life can give a damn how you feel, fo' real. So I'm ready to knock this dead time out and go do my real time in that real world and get on my grind.

Vonnie Pooh Pooh the only ninja I'a kill and die for. It '09 and it our time to shine straight like that.

**-Shawny B**

**From The Beat:** If you just had a boy and you're about to have a girl, does that mean you're responsible for two children by two different girls? If so, then we have to take back the word "responsible," and substitute the word "irresponsible." Why would you bring children into the world when you are still unable to take care of yourself? How will getting on your "grind" help your children? Where will it lead you? Your son doesn't need or want you to die or kill for him. He wants and needs you to live for him and be responsible for him. When will that happen?

## Sacrificing My Future

I think I need to change and give up struggles that get me caught in the game. I wanna be a better person by talking to my mama to the troubles I have, for my mama can see that I really wanna change to become a better person, which I can be. It gets hella hard when I feel triggered by others' actions towards me.

Also, I feel by me giving up sacrifices for my family makes me feel like I can make it. I can live to become who I want to be if I challenge myself enough to where I can be honest and loyal to my mama. I am blessed for having a mama who always have my back, even when I got difficulties on my shoulders. Mama, when I look at you, I see a mother who really cares about her daughter and who wants the best for her, which is me. Thanks, Mama. I love you 'til I die.

**-Young Cali**

**From The Beat:** We hope you show this piece to your mama. She will see in it the beginnings of the responsible young woman she has always seen in you even when you didn't see it in yourself. Work on those anger issues because losing your temper and going off on someone is the quickest way we know to lose your freedom and everything you've worked for. When you get out of here, stay out of here; that's the best way to honor and respect your mother.

## Lucky Or Unlucky

I really don't believe in luck or unluck, I believe in God and faith. That's what I believe in. You know my brother, Darious, got killed and we didn't have a piece of him on earth. But February 8th, God gave me a beautiful niece. She so adorable. She is premature. At first, she wasn't eating and they had to feed her through a tube, and, on top of that, her body temperature kept dropping. Now she's eight days old and she is getting breast fed, and that was all through faith.

But she a survivor. She got it through her blood, and all these beezies that's already hating on her know what's up. She's a beast an' she going to be ready to attack. Like they say, she get from her daddy. But, yeah, I'm out. Love y'all. Her name is Derion September copper. But I'm out. Until next time.

**-Queen Bee**

**From The Beat:** We're so glad Darious has left a part of him behind, but we have to ask why you would encourage your baby niece to become a beast, to learn how to attack. That sounds like a prescription that leads exactly to where you are right now! Wouldn't it be a better tribute to your brother to guide her, protect her, teach her, and help her to become educated, intelligent, and independent?

## The Love I Have For You

The love I have for you is more than love. The love I have for you is respect. The love I have for you is more than love. I see you as my king. I see you as my role, my everything. And then you go and move on without even telling me.

You told me you loved me. You said you will always be there for me, but you lied to me. You promised me you will always love me, but you know what? I don't care no more. You can get it moving. The love I have for you is gone, so, boom! I don't love you no more.

So I am going to keep it moving on you and I am going to drop you like a pack of Newports. I don't want you no more, so, boom! I don't want you.

**-Liss Baby**

**From The Beat:** Before you give your love to any boy, you have to give it to yourself. By that we mean you have to find a way to live on the outs without risking your freedom or your health. When you're in a better place — in school, thinking about your future, helping yourself — then you will find someone who loves the real you.

## Cash Rule Everything Around Me

What's happenin' with The Beat? It's ya boy Jeez. Let me tell ya how money rules everything and how people go past they limit to get it. I hustle every day on the outs, but I ain't shhh but a brotha tryna do me. Tryna get rich or die tryin'. People goes through people's house, kill people, and hella otha stuff. It's mainy but get it or get spitted trying to. Feel me.

**-P Jeez**

**From The Beat:** Are you really feeling what you're writing? Get rich or die trying? We think if you actually thought death was around the corner, you would rethink that "get rich quick" strategy and realize that the slower, step-by-step approach is not only more likely to lead to riches over time, but to keep you alive and well until old age.

## Fed Up Completely

What's really good? This Von gonna get at y'all fo' a min. Man, these attorneys and POs keep asking the soldier where I get my way from. They think I come from a dysfunctional family, but my family don't got nothing ta do with my ways. Man, I'm me, I'ma do me and can't nobody do me betta than I can do me. If they knew betta, they'll do betta.

They also be sayin' shhh about my environment, but what do you expect? I'm from San Francisco, and the majority of my district is violent. They tryna make a brand new map without us. But it ain't gone happen. But I'm getting fed up with this lil' kid life comin' back an' forth to the halls, so I gotta get goals together so a ninja don't gotta worry about this shhh. I'm fed up, gone.

**-Von**

**From The Beat:** Without an education or a job, it is very hard to stay out of places like this. But if you're tired of this back and forth, then you have to take control of your life and make some changes, since the system for sure isn't going to change. What goals can you set for yourself that you can accomplish without having to risk your freedom or your life? You say you're family had nothing to do with who you are, but we can't accept that. They are a part of you and you are a part of them. What would they like you to accomplish?

## So Real

Started with nothin', turned into somethin'  
Neva had a job, so you know ya girl hustlin'  
I keep it so real, while these otha females frontin'  
But bein' locked up got me feelin' like I'm nothin'  
And everywhere I turn it's my bustas that's provokin' me to get mad

Plus, I'm sad

I'm not jokin', it's really all a cycle  
'Cause I'm young and steady thuggin'  
My big homies told me, "Thug it out  
But no dumb shhh"

And, "It just a game

But the rule is 'not to get caught'"

Bein' up in here make me stronger

Show no "weak" thoughts

And knowin' that the squad raised a savage

Ain't no big loss

I'm jus' missin' school

And the shhh that got me locked up!

**-Safearia**

**From The Beat:** Those "big homies" who told you to thug it out and that it's all a game may look "big" to you, but their minds are small, very small. Why pattern your behavior after a bunch of people who have lots of experience as prisoners, or taking orders from shot-callers on the street, but never taking control of their own lives. It's not just school you are missing Safearia, you are missing a way of thinking that could lead you away from this and toward something more meaningful in your life, like a good education to prepare yourself for a life of freedom and family. As long as you're down to follow, you'll be getting a lot of behind-these-walls experiences.



## Palabras (Response To The Editor)

Orale, check it out. My piece, "It All Comes Back" is based on a double meaning. It's a hypothetical piece that challenges the average youngster who has plans to become a gangbanger to really contemplate if that's the decision they truly want to sacrifice themselves at a critical price; therefore, causing them to rethink the decision. And in order to do that, I just stated it is necessary to tell it like it is. That's my nature, take it or leave it, it doesn't get any more simple than that. You can't tell one side of the story without the other—it just doesn't function that way, and contrary to popular belief, exposing what's mandatory does in fact, discourage.

So mi consejo to you is to be more open-minded instead of trapping yourself in a judgmental box. In conclusion, I must state that you sound a bit hypocritical, considering the fact that on several occasions I have personally heard Beat facilitators promote individuality and to express ourselves honestly. In conclusion, if you dislike what I write, don't publish it at all and skip all the inane palabra changing mierda, or better yet, I just won't submit mi wilascos to hypocrites. Orale, pues, this jaina's out. Al rato.

**-Grumpy**

**From The Beat:** You're right, there is a certain hypocrisy in encouraging self-expression, and then censoring what we can't or won't print in that expression. But that is the nature of every publication; there are certain rules that, if we did not follow, would lead us to be licked out of county facilities very quickly (as we already have been in some). So, you either have to put up with our "inine" words changing your mierda, or not write for The Beat. The rules are the same for all. You say that by putting it down honestly, some will be discouraged by the reality. But we think you're not being entirely honest. You make it sound like you're being objective, just describing both sides of what you see, but there is much too much passion for one side of the "balance" you say you're presenting — too much boasting about being a gangster and too much ridiculing of those you find wanting. To you, those that take the challenge have courage and those who are weak shouldn't be in it. That already prejudices the discussion. We hope you'll step back from your stated position here ("If I can't play by my rules, I'll take my marbles and I just won't play"), because we have tremendous admiration for your skills and — despite your certainties to the contrary — we hope your excellent brain will cause you to rethink your dedication to someone else's creed. We want to encourage you to keep writing, but only if you're writing does not sound like an advertisement for gang banging (as in your last piece, "Dark Angel" in which you salute your rag and laugh at the "fools" who try but fail to emulate you).

## Getting Out And Doing Right

The times I have been unlucky is when I am outside and I get in trouble over some stupid stuff. But if I get with a good crowd, all that will change I think and then I wouldn't get in trouble so much. If I start going to school and I never get in trouble, that's good and lucky because I am doing the right thing. When I am doing right, I don't get in trouble. So when I get out, I am go do the right instead of the bad. But it is me, Ya Boy Speedy Bad Ass .

**-Speedy Bad Ass**

**From The Beat:** Are you really talking about luck? It seems like you're saying that if you do bad things, bad luck follows, but if you do good things, good luck follows. So, when you say you are going to "do the right" (and bring yourself good luck), what kinds of things are you thinking about doing (and not doing)?

*If my mom or grandma ever asked me to sacrifice anything for them, I would...*

## Love At Night

I love making love to someone older than me. I love to play music. The older women love it. They love me. Older women have experience with their love making.

**-Lil' Goo**

**From The Beat:** If you're talking only about the act of sex, then you may be right that older women can draw on their experience in ways that younger girls cannot. But are you using the term "love making" in the same way? In other words, have you experienced love (with or without sex) with either older or younger women? Is there a difference between love and sex?

## Awake From Within

Death circling around me  
And it's drownin' me in  
Been losing my whole life, now it's time to win  
Learnin' to separate fakes from friends  
The real me now's awake from within  
I'm done livin' at the bottom, time to rise to the top  
Interrupt my hustle get left in the grass  
And phony wannabe friends get left in the past  
Psych, sorry my ass  
You haters gone with the wind  
Nothing else to say but good-bye Beat Within

**-Young Panch**

**From The Beat:** We're not sure what has awoken within you. We'd like to believe that it's an awakening of what changes you need to bring about to avoid the consequence of imprisonment, but we had to remove some lines that threaten others, so we're waiting for the evidence that you've had enough of this. The system won't change; it's up to you.

## Money Lucky

One day I go to my friend's house. On the way I see a 100-dollar bill. Then I pick it up. That's called lucky.

**-Alex**

**From The Beat:** We almost didn't print this, Alex, because it's too short! Don't be lazy! You can write a lot more than this. Where were you when you found that money? Did you spend it all on yourself, or did you buy things for others, too? Was that the only lucky thing that happened to you?

## Sacrificing For My Future

What's up? This be the one and only Jessenia. I think that in order to make my future better, I have to change my ways, which would need a lot of work. I have gone through a lot of situations that God has put me in, but I would have to give up my block, and that's one thing I can never do, not because people gonna talk or peer pressure, but because that's where I was raised. That's my second home. That's where I spend all day and every day of my life. I feel that if I can do something good for myself, it would start from there.

If my mom or grandma ever asked me to sacrifice anything for them, I would, but I know they would never ask me to leave my 'hood, because they know how much it means to me. All they ask me to do is be successful and be something with myself. But for now, I just want to do my time, get out, and get on my feet, and be happy with my friends, family, and my man, Chris. So if haters gon' hate, I'ma let them, because in the end I'ma shine.

**-Jessenia**

**From The Beat:** We applaud your commitment to "shine," but what are you planning to do to make that happen? The fact that you are here tells us that your strategy has not worked well, so you need to come up with something else. We want to encourage you to leave the 'hood, at least temporarily, and to explore the much, much bigger world that lies beyond. Unless you know what's out there, how can you compare what you have to what you might have? Don't you think your mom and grandma would like you to sacrifice whatever it is you're doing that takes you away from them?



## Waiting To Hear: "You Are Released"

My son is coming through  
But am still not out yet  
I feel myself lucky to find a caring baby mama  
But I feel unlucky to have a sick mind  
I feel lucky for still breathing  
It was unlucky for them people I hurt  
But that was the past  
And now I'm looking toward the future  
I'ma raise my son with care and love  
I'ma try to provide him with all his needs  
Let me out of here  
I have a life and responsibility to take care of  
Can't wait till the day they say "you are released"  
Till then I'm still waiting with hope...

-Free Me

**From The Beat:** Unless you deal with the "sickness" that brings you here, you can't be the father you want to be to your son. Finish school and prepare yourself for the responsibilities of adulthood. To be the best father you can be you first have to be the best person you can be.

## Vons Strategizing

What it really is with The Beat? This ain't the kid but the grown man, Von, up in this dirty rat hole wit' no way out. I'm tryin' to keep my head up and doing a lot of thinking. I'm strategizing how to find my way to the exit and not get lost up in here again, ya'msayn? The big dawg getting too old fo' all this shhh, havin' these lil' weak-ass big mouth staff thinking they got the strongest hand, threatenin' us with all this room time. But I'm fed up gone.

-Von

**From The Beat:** The sad reality is that, whatever you think of them, the staff does have the strongest hand in here. If you're truly fed up having to take orders from strangers, there's only one solution: when you touchdown, don't come back. Are you making a plan for when you get out? That's how you should be using your time here, making plans that go from step one to your goal, so that you can follow your road map.

## Missing The Action

What's poppin'? I've been down for a minute now. I don't know where I'm 'bout to go. Times been goin' fast lately. I'm up here holdin' it down, ridin' solo bolo. I'm missin' out on the action, but once I'm out this thang, bruh...

-T-Ras

**From The Beat:** What's "the action" you miss so much? If you go back to the "action" that got you here, what makes you think the consequences will be any different the next time?

## The Boy Boy Getting' Out

Yeah, it's that ninja Grimey. What's good with The Beat? I'm just waiting these last few days in here. I'm go do me at this grouper down the way for a minute. Can't say where I'm going. You know how them hatas is.

But yeah, get at me. You know where I'ma be when I knock this group home out, so come see what's up. I miss the block hella much, man, holdin' them hatas and getting the paper, ya'msayin. Dadadoe is what it is right now, but all the thugs stay up. I'ma see you when I get the home pass. I'ma be out here for the summer and you know I'm getting active straight up.

-Grimey The Realist

**From The Beat:** If you think you can "get active straight up" — go back to the block you miss so much and get back into the same stuff that led you here — without facing similar or worse consequences, then you're still thinking like a child. The prisons are filled with men who thought they had learned how to be slick in their juvenile years. We hope you don't have to join them before you see the path you're on leads nowhere.

## I Need To Be In School, Learning

Well, it's boring in here. I already know this is not the place for me. I mean, we do get a lot of time outside the room, but being in my room is just reading and sleeping. It's not me.

I'm used to being with my friends, being on the phone 38/7, and texting. But I know God let things happen for a reason, so I'm just go' put it in his hands and let him do what he think is best for me. I know he would never do nothing that can hurt me or that I can't handle. But I know I'm going to change, because I know what I want to do in the future. This will not actually help me, because I need to be in school, learning.

-Tannia

**From The Beat:** If being in here gives you the motivation you need to finish school (which should be your first priority), then maybe it was worth it to be here. Nobody likes being in jail, being told what to do and when to do it. Jail is designed to make you want to stay away. Staying in school is the best way to accomplish that.

## Window Warriors

Many brothas in here be window warrioring, like muggin' behind windows they gone hurt somebody, or they get stripes for it. I'm P Jeezy. I don't got to explain myself, but the othas think they do.

People come in here talking 'bout what they did and stuff. (But it never happened) Real brothas do real things and don't tell, and the fake let everybody know. So when you hear stories, don't pay 'em no mind 'cause it's fake like the brotha who told you.

-P Jeez

**From The Beat:** We always read pieces saying, "I'm real but they're fake." We never read a piece that said, "They're real but I'm fake." Everybody thinks they're real, so forget about the ones you think are fronting, and focus on things that will keep you from coming here, like finishing school on the outs.

## Stop Talking

You ain't 'bout what you be talkin' 'bout  
You ain't ready for ya mama to be walkin' out  
That big-ass church with all them people crying  
Hollerin' 'bout why you had to take my son  
That's what them choppass 'bout  
Is you 'bout that, boy!

-C

**From The Beat:** Are these your words? Who are you writing to/about? If this is your original writing, we'd like to read a piece by you that describes what was happening in that "big-ass church" with all the people crying.

## This Place Has Changed My Life

Some people think that the halls is a bad thing. I think that coming here four times in six months was a good thing for me, because I hate this place so much that I will change my life not to come back. And thanks to all the staff that hated on me, and did me wrong,

'cause all they did was make me better as a person, and changed my life forever.

Every time I left this place, I said that I was not coming back, but in the back of my mind I knew I was lying to myself. But this time around it will be different, a lot different.

-Snow Man

**From The Beat:** Hating this place and they way you are treated when you're here should be enough to make anyone want to give up the things that lead you here. But what you did not explain is why it took you four times to stop lying to yourself? How do you know that this time is truly different? What's your plan for success when you touch down?



## Sacrificing For My Future

What I have to give up to change is I have to stop smoking weed and getting in trouble, start to get my life together and get a job to help out my family. What I do now is not going to lead me anywhere.

When I get out of here, I am getting my life together and I will start working. And I am going to stop smoking weed.

**-Sergio**

**From The Beat:** Well, it's all up to you. You already know what's holding you back.

## My Family Is Sacrificing

My family has given me their money and there time. They went out of their way for me. They cared because they were there for me.

What I want to sacrifice is my time and also to show them that what they sacrifice was worth it and that they did it for a good cause. I'm going to go to school and get a diploma and a job and show my family I cared also.

**-B**

**From The Beat:** Do it! They deserve this and more. Make it happen. Make them proud and don't let anyone hold you back from making this happen. Show no weakness when it comes to this! Ask for help if you need it too!

## Sacrificing For My Future

Sacrificing my life is like giving up everything I have. One of the things I should especially give up in my life is my attitude and my bad language at home. Also, the thing that keeps me back from not making that sacrifice is by trying to be cool in front of my friends and not being a good teenager.

When I see that my parents always sacrifice something for me, especially my mom, I want to show her that I would sacrifice anything for my mom because she showed me in my life that she really loves me and cares about me.

Like one example, in my life, was when I was smaller I use to be a really bad troublemaker. They would always call my dad from work and next thing you know my dad sacrifice his job to take care of me at home.

One thing I'm willing to give up in my life is my respect, my language, and my attitude because my parents have showed me a lot in life. And when you're willing to give up and sacrifice, you should go right ahead and go for it.

**-Alejandro**

**From The Beat:** Friends can play a big role in our lives, but why let someone control the way we are? Although they might not directly "control" you, your actions are still based off of what kind of impressions you can make on them. In the end you have to decide.

## Remaking America

It means a lot to us just because we need change. Obama said that he wants to remake America and that he needs our help. That stuck with me just because we're losing a lot of things we need.

A lot of people are losing their jobs and homes. They talk about taking away welfare and housing, some of us really need that stuff. They're making it so that medical won't even pay when you go to the doctors.

That's sad, we really do need a change. It would do us a lot of good. Maybe even then some of the people will change too. We would have better lives that way. I really hope Obama really helps us change this world around.

**-Germella**

**From The Beat:** We hope so too!

## Change

I'm changing for the better. All my life I've been messing up, never going to school and giving my mom a hard time. Just running the streets doing whatever to get money, having a lot of dudes.

I didn't care how no one else felt about how I was living. I wasn't even living at home at 15. Then I got a reality check when I almost lost my mom. She had got stabbed and lit on fire. That woke me up and made me think. I wanna make my mom proud. I wanna make myself proud. I wanna be able to look at myself and say I made it and I am somebody.

I'm 'bout to be 18 in 5 months and I know if I keep living this life, the same thing that happened to my mom could happen to me. I have dreams, I wanna be a nurse. I want my kids to be proud to call me mom. I've been doing a lot better I'm get out of here on the 1-29-09. I got my GED and I'm going to start community college.

Me and my mom are getting along. I've been staying at home. I'm changing and I like this change. I just wanna thank you to my mom for being strong and holding on and never giving up on me. For helping me get through all of this I love you. To my boyfriend of two years now I love you and thank you for sticking with me through all my shhh... I know it's been hard.

**-Germella**

**From the Beat:** What was going through your head when you found out what happened to your mom? Were you locked up or on the outs when you found out? Even with this going on, you still found the strength to step up and change! We know you can do it and we're pulling for you.

## Your Gonna Regret It

You cheated, you lied.

You hit me, I cried.

You said that you loved me,

But I want you to see,

That you'll regret this,

And I'm the one you'll miss.

You're going to cry,

And come to me on your knees,

I'll look down at you "Sigh"

Then say "ninja please!"

**-La Foolish**

**From The Beat:** What advice would you give to others who may be stuck in an emotionally/physically abusive relationship? What are you doing for yourself?

## The Wrong Ways Of Life

To change my future I would have to give up everything I had, which means all my tattoos removed, and I would have to give up all my friends, at least the ones who don't drink or smoke. But I would also have to give up my social life which means no drinking and smoking, or kicking it, and I would have to get a job and start being with my family because in the end they the only ones that's gonna be there for you, and if I would have listened to my family in the first place I wouldn't be here at all. But I would give up everything right now just to be with my family and my girlfriend.

Well, for all you youngsters out there just to let you know that there's nothing to prove to anybody and it's not worth it, you guys should just be with you families and enjoy life while you're still young.

**-Clumsy**

**From The Beat:** Are you ready and willing to make the break? This break from the of you, will be the best thing for your future. You want to look back on your life with pride, nor regret.

## Unlucky Times

Well, what's up, Beat? It's the homeboy, Cash. Well, I just went to court today and I feel like I'm going through some unlucky times in my life. I just found out that I'm a suspect on another murder charge. Now it's two of the worst charges on me. But I don't really know, 'cause I didn't do shhh. But the other murder charge, I might have to go through the time.

It's crazy. I once felt lucky and now I feel unlucky. Two murder charges are too much. Damn, sometimes I feel like there's nothing I can do to change the situations I put myself through. I've been through a lot, for only being seventeen years old. Well, that's what's been happening with me. Gots to go.

**-Cash**

**From The Beat:** We don't want to put any more pressure on you, Cash, but we have to ask if you ever think about the victims of those two murders, whether you had anything to do with either one of them or not. We ask that because we see how easy it is, when you're cast into a dungeon and are perhaps facing years in an even darker dungeon, to forget your own responsibility, and the people at the other end who are having to deal with a permanent loss of someone they loved as much as you love your family. Do you see any connections between you and your life and them and their lives?

## Good Father

What up Beat? This is Sleepy from Santa Clara. Well, Beat I'm hella mad because I'm going to Nevada, an out of state group home. Man, I wish I never ran away from Visalia but then I don't because I might not have met my beautiful girlfriend Nissa that I love so much. I wish I could be out so I can be there for my son and my grandmother that has been there since day one. She's pretty much like my mom.

My mom was pretty much locked up most of my life and I never met my dad. I'm trying to be a good father and be there for him. That's why I'm going to do my time and not run. I'm trying to get hall time but I don't know, I wish.

I was mad too because I'm not going to be with my lady Nissa. I love her a lot, she is my everything. I don't want anyone think, I'm my own person I don't follow other people, I do my own thing.

**-Sleepy**

**From The Beat:** You're on the road to bettering your life, but how will you get the ball rolling? For now, all you can do is keep your head up, but don't think that this time in the hall is just dead time! Use this time to your advantage - read and write- and make your plans for the outs now; it'll be easier to avoid the places/people who might land you back in the hall.

## Luck And Unluck

What up, Beat? I remember when I used to blaze it up every day at school. Never got caught, not even once. Felt pretty damn lucky.

All that luck changed one day, the day that got me locked up. Well, I was blazin' with my lady. I had two grams, so we were blazin' it up like crazy. All of a sudden I felt someone watchin' me, but to realize it was my vice-principal. He searched me, me not knowin' I had a filero (knife) in my backpack.

Even though I got caught, I didn't stop blazin' it up, mayne. I blow smoke like a chu chu chu chu train. Unlucky? Shhh, tell me about it. Stay up and stay strong.

**-Mr. Green**

**From The Beat:** We hope that all that smoldering at your age doesn't lead to some feared disease down the road, like testicular cancer! Now that would truly be unlucky! And by the way, what do you need to carry a knife to school for?

## Sacrifice For Your Future

If there is anything we must sacrifice as humans it is our pride and arrogance.

The world moves on,

but we are if we still hold dear our pride

and to write and become stronger,

combine our knowledge and advance.

If any have kids, let go your haughtiness and give them the life

that never you had. Take them out and have fun be there for them. Advance and let go of your anger.

**-Derrick**

**From The Beat:** This is a great piece! Maybe you can make it longer and explain in detail what you mean by this.

## Hit All My Life

What up, Beat: This is Yoggie from last week. Well, I am thinking about being a homeboy from my 'hood. I don't know yet, but I would like to, because my mom is one, so is my sisters, but I am scared. All my life I been hit, so that why I am scared to be a homeboy.

**-Yoggie**

**From The Beat:** If you've been hit all your life, Yoggie, we hope you don't follow in the footsteps of your mom and sisters, but carve your own path in life. Stay in school; get your diploma; find someone you love and want to spend time with, and move forward with your life. The other way leads here, or worse...

## Talk Now

I'm looking in the shadows of the valley of death, looking up, praying to the lord, "Take my guilt away," but the cops wanna hold me for eternity. They better count their blessings. I go to juvenile hall... look how many fans I get. I'm loving it. I'm gonna make their graves, 'cause they ain't got nothing on me. They can't hold me down.

The cops talk smack because they wear their badges, but they better tell God they're sorry for holding an innocent person in chains.

**-Moe Joe**

**From The Beat:** If there is a god that we all have to answer to, then there will be a lot of cops trying to explain things that have no good explanation. But, of course, there will also be a lot of young men trying to come up with some good stories, too. Do you really want god to take away your guilt? Maybe he gave it to you so you wouldn't be tempted to repeat the mistakes of the past.

## Gotta Keep Fighting

Chorus

I keep on praying to the Lord to take my sins away. I keep on suffering. Why can't I see my sis? I keep holding on.

Verse

I keep on ducking from the cops, ready to run. But I could neva run, I could neva hide, so I gotta stay strong. I gotta fight my battles, just never lose. I was raised by the dead so ain't no stopping me. My blood keeps falling every time I win. They see a beast, but they see wrong. My heart stops every time my family shed a tear, but there ain't no running, so I gotta fight, 'cause no one can hold me down.

Chorus (X2)

**-Moe Joe**

**From The Beat:** "They" see a beast, but what do you see? You say you have to fight, but what are you fighting for? Or against? If you're in it to win it, can you define what "winning" means?



## Shine

Yeah, it's about that time to get money and be positive. That means to climb mountains and go through mazes or be that negative person and get money by any means necessary either or I'm getting money and doing me but I really want to live life to the fullest. One day make it big in business or be the next O.G. dope dealer.

That's my life, I'm fighting a battle. I think I'm going to lose but I know I'm going to win the war so get money and be successful. That's the business, that ninja shine.

**-Shine**

**From The Beat:** You can be successful in life, you don't have to settle for dealing dope! If you're willing to work hard for what you want and work to get it then you can do it.

## Patience

I think the more you're patient with something, the more it will come out the way you want it to.

The phrase "nothing changes overnight," to me means that you can't expect things to be different from bad to good because it will still be there.

For example, if you have a death in your family you can't expect for the person to come back the next day or get over it in a day. You have to be patient with things.

**-Patient**

**From the Beat:** You're absolutely right, Patient, you can't expect things to change in a day. But how do you start the process of change?

## Ya Boy's Luck

What's up Beat? My court date went well. The judge gave me a few months in "Life Skills" and I get out with no probation. You can say I'm lucky, but unlucky at the same time because I'm doing a few more months.

It's lucky but unlucky 'cause I'm in here messing up my school and college plans. I'm also lucky 'cause God has gave me the athletic ability to have college scouts and scholarships.

A coach even came to visit me in here and has plans for me when I get out. So overall you can say I'm lucky and I'm going to change my ways and friends so my luck won't change.

**-Hollywood**

**From The Beat:** If you are gifted with opportunity, use your talent to your advantage. Keep us posted.

## Guns Are Necessary

I think that's guns are necessary just for the fact that people need protection and you never know when its going to be needed. I know that me and my family have been in situations where if I didn't have a gun I wouldn't be here today. I'd be 6 feet under.

Off something that pushes my buttons, I hate when someone talks shh about people that are mentally ill. I think that's messed up. I mean, I don't trip off someone saying that someone looks retarded but when someone talks about how they can't do shhh for themselves or they should die. Hell no.

Then about me. Well, I get out in 30 days, on the 5th of January, and I am hella excited. I might not see this one but have to say it's been a crazy journey. I can't come back here no more but I know that I'm moving on to bigger and better things.

**-Baby Face**

**From The Beat:** The way our neighborhoods are now, guns do seem necessary. What can we do, as a community, to make the streets safe so we don't have to pack heat all the time?

## Lucky or unlucky

I feel lucky that I have a family that cares about me and a girlfriend that's there for me.

I just get unlucky sometimes and I end up being in the wrong place at the wrong time but all I can do is learn from my mistakes.

It's just my luck that I end up in the hall and about to do 5 month, but I'm going to do my best and try to turn my luck around.

**-Brandon**

**From The Beat:** Maybe it isn't luck, it could be (like you said) being at the wrong place at the wrong time or the choices you make or the people you hang out with. Now is the time to think about whether it's luck or not and see where the problem lies.

## Lucky and unlucky

I feel that I'm lucky because I got a lady who shows me she really cares and that has a good head on her shoulders and that is also hella beautiful.

But I also feel unlucky because me growing up since I was younger basically without my family going through a lot.

Having to get my own things and having to take care of my little brother so I really have a tough life but when I get out I plan on getting a job and help my lady as much as possible.

Love you Anthony & Amanda.

**-Eddie**

**From The Beat:** Thank you for sharing this with us! You're going through a lot now but you can choose your future, you just have to apply yourself and work at it! We know you can do it, it might be hard at first but when the alternative is being locked up or dead then it shouldn't be too hard to choose.

## My Family Is Sacrificing

My family has given me their money and there time. They went out of their way for me. They cared because they were there for me.

What I want to sacrifice is my time and also to show them that what they sacrifice was worth it and that they did it for a good cause. I'm going to go to school and get a diploma and a job and show my family I cared also.

**-B**

**From The Beat:** Do it! They deserve this and more. Make it happen. Make them proud and don't let anyone hold you back from making this happen. Show no weakness when it comes to this! Ask for help if you need it too!

## My Baby Mama

What up, Beat? It's Nino. Well, today I am going to write about my baby's mama.

Well, when I got out this last time I met some girl and it was love at first sight. We talked on the phone for like four hours and it seemed like I knew her for a long time.

Well, we hit it off and before I got locked up she told me she was pregnant and I was hella happy and I started to look for a job. Also, I was doing hella good and I got locked up for something I didn't do. Hopefully, I get out on my court date.

Now, my lady is a couple months pregnant. Also, she's going to move in with me. Well, that's all for today. To all locked up, stay up. Much love. Alrato

**-Sunny**

**From The Beat:** You really have to think now, you're going to have a baby and the world won't just be about you, Sunny. Congratulations on your bundle of joy yet to come and we wish you the best in getting your life right, for you and your baby.

## If They Knew Me

Living in my shoes is not an easy thing. I wish my PO and judge would live at least one day in my shoes. They would never last.

I've live in a car for a couple of months, to around four or five. After that, I lived with family and strangers. I lived a normal life from around nine to eleven, but no one really raised me.

My father got locked up and my mom would care about the three little bro's, so I was raised basically by homeboys and the streets.

So now I'm in here. I wish the PO and judge could feel like I feel, living the life I lived. I wish they could see how hard it is for kids like us to make it, 'cause we don't know the way. I wish they could see how hard it is to look at these walls all day everyday for a long time, I wish they could give us a break.

**-Silent**

**From The Beat:** We appreciate the piece and we understand how you feel, though it is in your best interest to get your life back on track and start working hard to never return to juvenile. You cannot rely on the homeboys to make things better, it's on you to see the way. Stay focused and determined!

## For My Mother

What's up Beat? Today's topic is about sacrificing for my future. Well, here I am willing to sacrifice for my family my love ones. I am willing to sacrifice for my love ones because I think they have sacrificed enough for me.

For instance, my mom has been willing to sacrifice all her life just to put a roof over me and my brothers' heads.

I think she has done enough for me and now it's my turn to return all the good things she has done for me. Anyways I am willing to do the same for her.

For instance, when she is having a hard time looking for a roof to put over her head. I wouldn't even want for her to keep on struggling looking for a job when her son can be their for her. I would want her to spend the rest of her life just relaxing and enjoying her last few years of life.

**-Crime**

**From The Beat:** Exactly! She has a son that can help her situation and make her life easier. What are you planning to do to help her when you go home?

## Stop Running!

Man, to all, stop running! You're just running away from your problems. What, are you scared? You can gangbang, drink, steal cars but you can't do a program?

I see homeboys come in all the time running from the Ranch or failing or cutting off EMP.

I ran from the group in San Jose and Visalia, I cut off my EMP, I stole cars, I did a lot of bad stuff. I'm going to stop. I'm cool off getting in trouble. This is my seventh damn time, forget this, it's a messed up life to live.

People, just do your time and be cool, go to school, and stay out of trouble.

Well, much love to everyone that's locked up and to my lady that's here, I love you and you're always in my heart.

Well everybody, I know what you're going through, I feel your pain. Much love and respect!!

**-Sleepy**

**From The Beat:** Thank you for this piece, it's so true! What made you want to change this time, though? What inspired you to finally stop the bullshh and focus on what you want?

## What They Should Do

Hey what's up Beat? This is Carlos again. Well I am going to write about the topic what I think of PO's if they were ever locked up. They would go a lot easier on us. They would probably let people get a couple of dirty bottles, because the PO I got is hard on me. She gave me six to eight months and I would have expected to get EMP. So then that's all I could think of writing.

**-Carlos**

**From The Beat:** Why not making it easy and just follow your probation rules? Do your program and no drama!

## Lucky And Unlucky

I think some people get lucky and some people are unlucky. This ya boy Dre speaking from the max. Some people get released when they do a big charge because they're lucky.

Some people might do the same charge as them and get washed.

Also other races that ain't African American they're the one that are unlucky especially in this county.

**-Dre**

**From The Beat:** Which of those people are you? A lucky or unlucky one? So, if you were in charge of sentencing people equally, how would you do it? What would be fair?

## I Hardly Know You

I hardly know you, but I feel I need you.

I feel like your that responsible young woman That I've been looking for.

I hardly know you but I wish I could hold you

In my arms and gaze into your eyes,

For me to say I love you and for you to say it back.

I hardly know you,

But girl, I need, I want you

I don't know why but I do.

**-Love Struck**

**From The Beat:** Great poem, Love! We hope that the special someone you're talking about feels the same about you. Maybe next time put a name on your piece and the girl's name, then she'll know it was meant for her AND she'll know who the young Casanova is! Remember, in order to make a relationship work you need to be free!

## Don't Try To Speaking On something You Don't Know

Well first welcome back, Beat. So first, I hope everybody is in great health and spirits. So about don't go there, well where to start?

Okay, I member a while back when I was talking to this certain youngster I was talking about my primo that passed away (relax in paradise) and she started to talk about how she chilled with him, drank, smoked with him all the time.

I was letting her talk then it hit me hard. I told her to keep his name out her mouth. So the point is, I hate when people try to speak upon shhh they don't know about. It just strikes me bad when people talk about my family or loved ones.

Just don't go there. It's just all out of respect, it could get some one mad. I'm out with most love and hate.

**-Nena**

**From The Beat:** When someone close to us passes, it hurts to hear other people speak about them but that doesn't mean that that person is trying to disrespect you. She might've known him too and just wanted to reminisce on the good times, Nena.



## Sacrificing For My Future

In life I would like to see myself succeed. When I think about succeeding in life I come to a list of things I wish I should have done.

I also know in life you can do anything you put your mind to so I don't necessarily base my life on what I wish I could have, should have, would have done but I do know this, now that I see things clearly and have a better view on life I wish I hadn't set myself back in life as many times as I did.

Some say, "God throws obstacles in your path to see how you work around them, but it is we who stall our time on that one obstacle in life that we should have been bypassed." I'm not too sure of the exact saying so that's the way I put it but to me that means when your mother tells you to clean the kitchen you should do it and get it out the way 'cause even if you stall or leave and come back, that same dirty kitchen is right there waiting for you.

So that is my only wish: that I don't keep setting myself back. I'm ready for change.

**-Bear Iyisha**

**From The Beat:** Although you may have set yourself back you still have your whole future to look forward to. Keep positive and keep your goal in your mind and you can do anything, even with obstacles blocking your way!

## Pain

Shhh is too, too crazy,  
Look, got bad luck like I ran and messed with the voodoo lady  
Every other week I'm in handcuffs,  
Stack something, lose something, something keeps  
mucking my plans,  
Moving in a hurry thinking some time slow  
When I pass the cemetery where lil' brother is buried.  
All I can do is salute and pound my chest.  
God got his army and we all His recruits  
But every other night I see demons do something crazy  
And don't the reason blame it on the ass so I say it's the  
season,  
tell my ninja's light the hell up 'cause I'm gonna get it,  
Something when the sadness turns into madness,  
Got me doin' shhh where I'm running from badges  
I can see my life in some flashes,  
I pour more Hen in the glass,  
I go to sleep in my soul,  
I cry, it's no lie, why you think I'm so high?  
And just watch the time go by, funny when ya mine gold  
mine,  
And ninja's is gold diggaz,  
Guess you gonna know when it's your time,  
Stress built up on my shoulders  
Forget it, now I'm gonna ride, now bring the hat low sitting  
over the eyebrow,  
Look at the stash, and think that I'm gas,  
On some godfather saga 'cause Veda wouldn't lay down,  
Me and destiny got a date,  
However rolling if I'm not go get your faith,  
'Cause I ain't fold I take whoever I been die for the day to  
my war on  
Reflect on the days when played grown man get my  
stroll,

**-Stackz**

**From The Beat:** It seems like being able to write in this style is a good way to get things off your chest-you can just let everything flow off you, but not many people can do this, instead they act on their feelings. What would you say to a friend that was in a bad mood and looking for a fight?

## Speak Up

I know one time that I was in a situation like this my boy was slamming heroin and I saw how it was starting to slam him.

One day I went by his pad and I told him that he needed to kick it or else he was gonna end up dead. I told him to call my dad 'cause he has been clean for 19 years - off heroin.

He said he wouldn't but when I left I wrote it down just in case. He got pissed and I didn't hear from him and then a few days later my dad told me he called and he's been off it for almost a year.

I'm proud of him. I mean, he still does shhh but he ain't slamming no more.

**-Baby Face**

**From The Beat:** You did a good thing, it's hard to stand up to our friends/family but sometimes we just have to. Are you two speaking now?

## Time GOING BY SLOW!

What's good, Beat? This Yung Uso Kefi, once again today I'm not really feeling the topic so I'm going to write about my time going by slow.

When I was in max looking at CYA, my time was going by hella fast. I don't know why, it seemed kind of messed up because I was going to the Y and I thought I was going to be mucked but then my PO was on my side. She's the best PO you could get because she talked to the judge talking about all the good stuff I was doing and she didn't even talk about nothing bad.

But anyways now that I'm in another unit, time is going by slower then slow. I think it's because I know I was going by slower then slow. I think it's because I know I was going to do a lot of time on my hands but I didn't and it's hitting me by making every day go slower for me.

Well Beat, with that said I'm out. Too all doing time keep your head up.

**-Yung Uso Kefi**

**From The Beat:** When you're unaware of what will happen with your life, if you'll get a strike or a life, time will take forever. We wish we could do something to speed up your sentence but we can't. All you can do now is keep your head up, write, read, and TALK with your PO!

## Soon To Be A Dad

Well I have a story for you, the story of a girl that has my baby on the way. In two weeks, she will be a few months. I am hoping that she will be fine without me there.

I was going to take her to get ultrasounds last week. I hope she made it there without me. It's funny. I got out the last time on December 6, and that night I express my feelings of love to her all night. You know what it's like to get out and see your girl after all that time. I wasn't able to control myself after thirty minutes. That morning, we checked the condom and it was ripped.

At first, we did not care. We were too busy, but life went on as much as I wish we could have stayed in her room. At first, it was cool. I did not even have to go to school. And would just kick it all day with the homeboys and my chicka.

About a week later, my lady told me she was pregnant and I am the dad. I am locked up and can't be there for her.

**-Hero**

**From The Beat:** How can she be fine without the support she needs. She'll need you more than ever. Having a child is a lot responsibility, so if we were you, we would do whatever was possible to be there and stop fooling around with your friends. Get smart! Seek help too!

## Forget Me And You

You said you loved me but you played me for a fool  
It's cool 'cause I knew the real you  
But to tell you the truth I'm the one who played you  
I hated how you said "don't do this" and "don't do that"  
And in the end you just stabbed me in the back  
But I ain't trippin' off what you say  
'Cause I still be sittin' and hittin' that dank  
I'm sorry, but it's all business  
I ain't got no time for you anymore  
All you were was a little girl, nothing more  
Girl, I remember when you used to do my chores  
Had you on a leash you sneaky chick  
But look here, girl, you long gone and no where to be found  
But by the way I was tired of giving you  
The wham, bam, thank you ma'am treatment  
And I'm a end this with a forget you and have a nice day.

**-Abraham**

**From The Beat: It seems like you're harboring some ill feelings towards an unlucky girl. Do you think this old flame has affected you in the way you look at other girls? Well this relationship didn't work out, and it will make both of you stronger!!**

## Still Waiting

Hey Beat, what's up? I'm just gonna write about how my court's been going. Well, it's still taking its time I have court on May 6. I just want this to all be over already. But it's true what some people say, that being in juvie ain't that bad 'cause it ain't county, YA or jail. So we're a little lucky to be here. Just change your life in here and everything that comes in life you can learn in here. I am.

The only reason why I wanna bounce already because I'm ready now. I've been locked up since Oct. 3, '08, for attempted murder. The DA's trying to give me life, but I know that I'm getting out soon having faith to always just stay up.

We could make it better for us in here when we go in the right path, just have to know which way to take it. Took me a really long time. Here's a hint on what to do... Look up!

So yeah, well, I'm just gonna stay strong and forget what everyone else says. This is my life, not theirs. Everyone should do that. So late. I'm out.

**-Moe Joe**

**From The Beat: Whether you get out soon or not, we think your faith should keep you strong and positive. What are the things you are doing to make it better for yourself?**

## Sacrificing For My Future

With me, I have a lot to sacrifice if I want to change, if I want my future better. Which I do.

I would have to sacrifice and slow down with the ways I'm getting money. With all the dudes and females I run with. My attitude. There a lot of things, I can go on and on.

The reason why I haven't sacrificed anything is because I'm not ready and it's hard. Really because I'm very independent and if I can't get stuff done than I'ma end up going back to that life style. My mom has sacrificed a lot for me and I would be willing to sacrifice everything for her.

**-Germella**

**From The Beat: You shouldn't need your mother to tell you it's time to change, you have your cell to tell you it's time to change. Being in there should be enough to make you want to turn your life around.**

## You Make Your Own Luck

I don't consider myself lucky or unlucky, but lucky and unlucky things happen to me... You bring your luck on yourself. If you're thinking positive, good things will happen. If you think negative, bad things will happen.

I've been lucky in situations and unlucky in others. It just depends on how my mind set is at the time.

**-Desz**

**From The Beat: What about now, are you thinking positive or negative? What do you see for your future? What's in it?**

## One Size Doesn't Fit All

What's good with the Beat? It's Lil' Man dropping some lines this week, about how it would be for the DA's, PO's, judges to put themselves in my shoes, or any other homeboy that's been in the system.

I would love to see them lock themselves in a cell with thin mattresses, rough ass covers, somebody else's underwear around your waist and some cold ass rooms, waiting for mail that never comes, visits that never take place, vatos telling you what to do, when to shower, and when to brush your grill.

These system people wouldn't last a minute in this life that I'm living. Well to all doing time, don't let the time do you. Que no? alrato.

**-Lil' Man**

**From The Beat: It's hard to live in the system, but remember, you don't have to live here. It's your choice. Right? The time is now to not only recognize you have a drug issue, but to put your words into action. You're too smart for juvenile, get back to school!**

## If They Were On Our Shoes

What I think if the DA's, PO's, PD's or judges step into the cells that we live in or be us for a second.

I think it would make them wanna not give us that much time or send people to CYA or prison as often as they do to us nowadays.

I also think that rich people can't just step into the poor people's shoes. I think that they have to live it to experience it.

**-Elmo**

**From The Beat: Well, you can be part of the change if you choose to become a DA, PO, PD, or judge, you can then give young people a better chance to rehabilitate, better than being here. What kind of program would you create that can help our young generation to stay out of trouble?**

## Locked Up

It's been a week in the cell  
Now I'm just living in hell,  
I'm wishing everything is gonna be well,  
doing time for the crimes,  
every time I sleep hoping it's all a nightmare,  
wishing I was never living this fear,  
16 years old  
the world I'm living in is so damm cold,  
I be thinking and thinking  
time is ticking  
so what is there to do now?  
Once I'm out everyone will be saying wow  
Trying to take a stand screaming out  
who the better man.

**-Layzie**

**From The Beat: The way to make things better to is address what brought you to juvenile and begin to work on bettering you. Are you ready to put in the work? It is not an easy task, but can be done!**



## Lucky Or Unlucky

I think I'm pretty lucky because I've been in situations that I probably wouldn't be out here. Like when I was drunk with one guy that lives in my 'hood and it was the first day he moved in from Puerto Rico.

This guy was pretty big, so everyone thought he was tough. Anyways we were drinking because one of the homeboys brought him over. We were drinking, having a good time, but the whole time I was kind of giving the new guy an attitude. So, we were hella drunk. The homeys from the 'hood and I sparked a blunt up and I didn't let him hit my blunt, so we started arguing and we ended up fighting. That fool was hella bigger and older, so he ended up beating me up. That's when I pulled out my shank and...

An hour later, they called my brother and they told me that they were going to call the cops and that's when I knew I was going away for a long time, but they called me and told me they weren't going to call the cops any more.

So, I went to his pad a couple of days later and apologized and we started chilling hella cool. We ended up being boys and me and the Puerto Rican got hella close.

I found out he was schizophrenic and one day he was going to go get his medicine and later on that day his mom told me he was dead and told me that a cop tazed him to death.

I was tripping I guess they tazed him for no reason and his mom sued the police and she got hella money, but it wasn't worth it, so that's my story about being lucky.

**-Willy**

**From The Beat:** We're sorry for the loss of your friend. Yes you were lucky he didn't press any charges against you that one day; otherwise your story would have been different. What did you learn from this experience?

## Sacrificing For My Future

What I have to give up to change is I have to stop smoking weed and getting in trouble, start to get my life together and get a job to help out my family. What I do now is not going to lead me anywhere.

When I get out of here, I am getting my life together and I will start working. And I am going to stop smoking weed.

**-Sergio**

**From The Beat:** Well, it's all up to you. You already know what's holding you back.

## Something I Will change

What's good with it Beat? It's that one and only Kefi coming at you.

Well today I'm going to talk about something I will change. Something I will change is being there for my mom. As you know I talked about my mom going back to Samoa. Even though when she comes back, I'm going to be there for her. I'm not going to let anything stop me from doing that, not even my boys. I'd spend more time kicking it with the usos/homeboys more than with my moms.

I think ever since I know my moms is going somewhere faraway don't mean I can't change and do what I said I was going to do.

**-Kefi**

**From The Beat:** Sounds good to us. Now that she is going away, she will need your support—doing things right. You don't want her to worry about you when being far away. Do you?

## My Mommy Martha

Hey what's up Beat? This your girl Esmeralda. Well, I'm not feeling these topics so I'm gonna write about my mom, Martha, and how much I miss her and how I want to be home with her.

Damn, I wish she could forgive me 'cause I put her through a lot and she still by my side.

Well mommy, I love you and this poem is for you.

Mommy,

Even though we have our ups and downs

You will always put a smile on my frown

Even when I put you down

You were always around

And maintained your ground

So here I am once again

Telling you I will be here

'Till the very end.

**-Esmeralda**

**From The Beat:** This is a beautiful tribute to your mother! What other ways could you show your mother your love and respect? Changing your lifestyle could be a way to show her that you care. What do you think?

## My Angel

My angel I express some words from my heart and it speaks to you...

I thank you for love and your time for always staying true....

True to yourself, because by that then you're also true to me.

True to our future and everything that we will be...

I wish I could hold you in my arms and gaze into your eyes...

And tell you that you are special and truly 1 of a kind...

Your beauty is more than skin deep and it's that I've ever wanted and thank god for you...

Thank you, God, for this wonderful and caring woman, thank you for answering my prayers.

Audrey, this poem is for you. Since we have been talking, I have over come so many obstacles because of you.

**-Jared**

**From The Beat:** This is a really touching tribute to somebody who is obviously very special to you. It's a beautiful poem and we hope that whoever it was written for was able to read it on Valentines Day last month.

## I Miss You Mom!

What's up, Beat? This Yung Uso Kefi coming at you once again. Today I'm going to talk about my moms.

Just the other day my mom went back to her hometown. She went back to Western Samoa and I don't know when she's coming back. What I'm trying to say is I miss you, mom. I hope you come back soon, your son Keith.

**-Yung Uso Kefi**

**From The Beat:** Did you and your mother speak about her trip before she left? What happens when you're released, Uso? Do you think you would ever live out in Samoa with your mother?

## RIP Too My Unborn Sis/Bro

Just know that I love you even though I never got to hold you, kiss you, and even got to know you. I just want you to know that I'm one of your big bruhs and you won't be forgotten.

**-Yung Uso Kefi**

**From The Beat:** Even though your little bro/sis didn't leave to see the world he/she might come in another form, Uso, you never know.

## Reminiscing

Hey Beat! It's your girl Lugo coming at you from Honors Unit. Well, I'm really not feeling these topics today but I have a lot on my mind chest right now and I want to get it off. First off, I'm on C program right now but the staff are letting me go tonight, so I thank them for that.

So, when I'm posted up in my room I just reminisce about everything. I think a lot about my family and how I was never there for them, especially not for my sister.

It kinda hurts talking about this but I need to get it off my chest. I just want to be the big sister. It kinda hurts talking about this but I need to get it off my chest. I just want to be the big sister I never was. I hope one day she can find deep down in her heart to forgive me.

Also, I hope my whole familia can do the same. I put them through hell. But they were by my side through thick and thin. And I really truly thank them for that.

Another thing I've been thinking about is my husband. Damn I hella miss him. It kills me to know what kind of situation he is in. But I hope for him the best.

-Lugo

**From The Beat:** You may not have been there for your sister or your family in the past but the past is over and done with, you have the future to look forward to. Now that you've gone through these hurdles in your life you can go forward with the knowledge you've gained.

## Locked Up

It's been a week in the cell  
Now I'm just living in hell,  
I'm wishing everything is gonna be well,  
doing time for the crimes,  
every time I sleep hoping it's all a nightmare,  
wishing I was never living this fear,  
16 years old  
the world I'm living in is so damm cold,  
I be thinking and thinking  
time is ticking  
so what is there to do now?  
Once I'm out everyone will be saying wow  
Trying to take a stand screaming out  
who the better man.

-Layzie

**From The Beat:** The way to make things better to is address what brought you to juvenile and begin to work on bettering you. Are you ready to put in the work? It is not an easy task, but can be done!

## For My Mother

What's up Beat? Today's topic is about sacrificing for my future. Well, here I am willing to sacrifice for my family my love ones. I am willing to sacrifice for my love ones because I think they have sacrificed enough for me.

For instance, my mom has been willing to sacrifice all her life just to put a roof over me and my brothers' heads.

I think she has done enough for me and now it's my turn to return all the good things she has done for me. Anyways I am willing to do the same for her.

For instance, when she is having a hard time looking for a roof to put over her head. I wouldn't even want for her to keep on struggling looking for a job when her son can be their for her. I would want her to spend the rest of her life just relaxing and enjoying her last few years of life.

-Crime

**From The Beat:** Exactly! She has a son that can help her situation and make her life easier. What are you planning to do to help her when you go home?

## Plenty On My Mind

What's cracking, Beat? Well, I have a lot, a lot, on my mind lately and sometimes I feel like I'm gonna go crazy with all this thinking I do.

Well, today my momma was supposed to visit me today but she didn't. It's all good though 'cause I won't be here for long.

Last time I was here, I did like 30 days and like a extra 15 days dead time and she never visited me. But I can understand her 'cause she hates seeing me like this and I don't like it when I see her cry, like when I turned myself in.

It killed me seeing her hella break down like she did, but like I said I won't be here for long, so until my release date in April, and it's almost March, I'll see her again!

Well, I have hella other shhh on my mind that really gets to me and brings me down, but I dunno I could probably write on and on 'bout that but for now I'll just end it here before I get all depressed.

-Christina

**From The Beat:** It hurts for any parent when they have to see the direction their kid is going, Christina. Do you think when you get out you'll try and change for your mother and yourself?

## My Loved Ones

I've decided to write about being lucky which I do consider myself.

I believe I'm the luckiest person in the world.

I'm alive, I got a loving family, girlfriend and something to look forward to when I get out. I feel that even though I'm here I'm happy.

There are a whole lot of people out there in worst situation.

Everything happens for a reason and it's up to you to make the best of it

-Elemen

**From The Beat:** You're right! There are a lot of people in bad shapes of situation. It seems like you got something that brings a smile in your face. Well, what are you willing to give up for them?

## Never Know What It's Like

What's cracking, Beat? This is Christina here to drop a few lines for whoever reads these things.

Well, one of the topics says if DA's or judges were to put themselves in our shoes or any other people incarcerated, would they know how we felt and see what it's like for us or especially if they incarcerate you for a long time or if they mess with your case unfairly?

Well, my answer to that is hell no. They'll never know what's it's like for us and what we think if they're just gonna do it for like an "Experiment". Only maybe if it would happen for real to them, but even then I got doubts.

They would have to know what it's like to miss out on so much with the people that matter most to them and lose a lot just 'cause of being incarcerated. Especially the young heads that be doing hella time and facing maybe life sentences or years.

I know have a lot to say about this but I don't even know if I'm making sense right now 'cause I'm rushing so I'ma cut this here.

-Christina

**From The Beat:** This was a great effort. You're right, the DAs, judges, or anyone really wouldn't know what it's like to be locked up. We hope that you will keep writing and get everything off your chest!



## Sacrificing For My Future

As I was reading down the list, "Sacrificing for my future" caught my attention.

Since I've been associating myself with positive people, I've started to change drastically my thought process. I've been analyzing my life and mindset and I wasn't glad with what I came up with.

Now that I've had a long time to really, really think about my life, I am willing to sacrifice myself- pride for my family or the girl I am going to have in my life soon.

Before I got re-incarcerated, I had that typical "I don't give a f---" mindset. I was the homeboy who would attack anyone who disrespected my fellow carnal (homeboy). I thought everyone was the same as I. I was mistaken.

For example, I was with two other people when I came back into juvenile hall. One of those people was one of my family member the other is a guy I considered a loyal friend. I've been through so many things with that guy. I knew him since I was attending pre-school.

When he heard "years" he sang like a bird about me. Since that happened, I started to think about the people I associate with. So friend or homeboys are something I am willing to sacrifice for my future or the future of the loved ones in my life. One love to all!

**-Chuko**

**From The Beat: Well said! Do it and you'll see how your life will become full of happiness and joy surrounded with the people you care about. Whatever you past and thoughts from the past were, leave it in the past. Start building up a new life that can make you proud and happy. It's on your hands.**

## Sacrificing For My Future

What's up Beat? Right now I'm in a position where sacrificing for my future is exactly what I have to do, because I'm being sent to Wyoming. From this point, I've been running from everywhere else so I got to make a lot of sacrificing, so I can try something new and be out legit.

**-Travieso**

**From The Beat: So what are you thinking to sacrifice to change your life around? You're not just saying this just to say it are you?**

## You Make Your Own Luck

I don't consider myself lucky or unlucky, but lucky and unlucky things happen to me...You bring your luck on yourself. If you're thinking positive, good things will happen. If you think negative, bad things will happen.

I've been lucky in situations and unlucky in others. It just depends on how my mind set is at the time.

**-Desz**

**From The Beat: What about now, are you thinking positive or negative? What do you see for your future? What's in it?**

## Lucky And Unlucky

I think some people get lucky and some people are unlucky. This ya boy Dre speaking from the max. Some people get released when they do a big charge because they're lucky.

Some people might do the same charge as them and get washed.

Also other races that ain't African American they're the one that are unlucky especially in this county.

**-Dre**

**From The Beat: Which of those people are you? A lucky or unlucky one? So, if you were in charge of sentencing people equally, how would you do it? What would be fair?**

## Lucky Or Unlucky

I think I'm pretty lucky because I've been in situations that I probably wouldn't be out here. Like when I was drunk with one guy that lives in my 'hood and it was the first day he moved in from Puerto Rico.

This guy was pretty big, so everyone thought he was tough. Anyways we were drinking because one of the homeboys brought him over. We were drinking, having a good time, but the whole time I was kind of giving the new guy an attitude. So, we were hella drunk. The homeys from the 'hood and I sparked a blunt up and I didn't let him hit my blunt, so we started arguing and we ended up fighting. That fool was hella bigger and older, so he ended up beating me up. That's when I pulled out my shank and...

An hour later, they called my brother and they told me that they were going to call the cops and that's when I knew I was going away for a long time, but they called me and told me they weren't going to call the cops any more.

So, I went to his pad a couple of days later and apologized and we started chilling hella cool. We ended up being boys and me and the Puerto Rican got hella close.

I found out he was schizophrenic and one day he was going to go get his medicine and later on that day his mom told me he was dead and told me that a cop tazed him to death.

I was tripping I guess they tazed him for no reason and his mom sued the police and she got hella money, but it wasn't worth it, so that's my story about being lucky.

**-Willy**

**From The Beat: We're sorry for the loss of your friend. Yes you were lucky he didn't press any charges against you that one day; otherwise your story would have been different. What did you learn from this experience?**

## Lucky Or Unlucky

People say that I'm lucky for what I got sentenced. I kind of agree to that. But I kind of think I'm unlucky 'cause my loved ones got some pretty heavy sentences.

My brother got six years and two strikes. Two of my co-parts failed fitness and are getting charged as adults.

**-Dave**

**From The Beat: Well, from your side, things look better. Focus on your situation and how to get out of this lifestyle aka misery. It seems that life has given you another chance to do something with your life.**

## Lucky Or Unlucky

I consider myself pretty lucky 'cause I'm still alive today and most of my homeboys are alive. I feel unlucky sometimes because I always end up writing on this yellow paper for The Beat Within.

In some situations when some homeboys get locked, I might get or they might get away and I might get caught. So really you're never "lucky" or "unlucky" all the time. Shhhh happens.

My luckiest homeboy off top! I don't know how many times he's cut off his EMP, ran from the Ranch or alternative, but he always gets out some way or another. Good shhh though! We need the homies in the 'hood not in the cells. To all in here just keep your head up.

**-Grinch**

**From The Beat: Why do you need your homeboys in the 'hood? To be productive legit citizens? To go to school to get good grades? To be good sons to the parents? Or to go back to the lifestyle that brings great pain and sadness?**

## Sacrificing For My Future

To make my future better, I am going to have to give up a lot of things that I got used to. I have got to sacrifice most of my old friends who are not going to sacrifice old habits with me.

I am trying to make change for my own benefit. If I have to do it on my own so be it.

I have never known anyone who has sacrificed more for me than my parents. My parents have sacrificed a lot of time and money for this crime I have committed. I know that when I get out, I could not repay them.

-Brian

**From The Beat:** Sounds a good start to us. What are your plans? Why can't you repay them back? What are your obstacles? If they've done so much for you, don't you think they deserve some appreciation in return?

## What I Need To Sacrifice

Today I'm going to write about something I have to sacrifice for my future.

Something that I'm going to sacrifice to benefit my future is to stop selling drugs. By me being able to do this, it's going to help me stay out of jail and it's going to help me go down the right road and become someone important in life and not just another statistic.

-Bb

**From The Beat:** That's a good thought, but also think about an education for brighter future. With a good education you can get a better job and better chances to succeed and earn things in the proper way.

## Love

Love is a strong word

A word that I have often heard

But it has no meaning

My body doesn't want it, but my heart is fiending

I've been with a couple of boys

No love, but I stay with them, a bad choice!

My heart feels torn

But when you're born with a broken heart it can never be rebroke

I want to find love... I think I did

But my feelings for him I hid

Love between a boy and girl

It's wonderful, so I heard

Never experienced it, that's no lie,

All the boys I meet seem to get all sly,

Well next time I write on these Beats

I hope I find love ...

-Joanna

**From the Beat:** What does this poem mean to you? Does it come from personal experience?

## To Want

Well if you got a rich person like Bill Gates and he volunteered for 30 days to make minimum wage and get food stamps. He would probably think it's gonna be a nice experience.

Well the first couple of days will go good, until he starts to want things like new clothes, go to fancy restaurants, need gas, or wants jewelry. Then he's gonna feel sad to want. Then we could just tell him how does it feel to want. Well, I got to go Beat late.

-Monkey

**From The Beat:** What do you think he would do to help the poor after this experience? If you had his money, what would you do to help the poor? Would you help?

## Ya Boy's Luck

What's up Beat? My court date went well. The judge gave me a few months in "Life Skills" and I get out with no probation. You can say I'm lucky, but unlucky at the same time because I'm doing a few more months.

It's lucky but unlucky 'cause I'm in here messing up my school and college plans. I'm also lucky 'cause God has gave me the athletic ability to have college scouts and scholarships.

A coach even came to visit me in here and has plans for me when I get out. So overall you can say I'm lucky and I'm going to change my ways and friends so my luck won't change.

-Hollywood

**From The Beat:** If you are gifted with opportunity, use your talent to your advantage. Keep us posted.

## Some Of Us Are Lucky

I think I'm lucky but at the same time I feel very unlucky because I was gonna get out last week but instead they brought up two more gay charges on me.

It just seems that sometimes they want to set you up for failure but I guess that's how the system is. But at the same time I feel very lucky because if I weren't 17 I would be facing 9 years in CYA. But thank God that I'm not, because I got most of the charges dropped and I'll be out in about a month and a half.

I also feel very lucky 'cause I got my family right behind me to help out with everything. So good luck to all you people and homeys out there doing time and have messed up families or what so ever is your problem.

Just remember to always keep your head up and just take it day by day and never look back at this place 'cause who knows, you might end up right back?

-Clumsy

**From The Beat:** Wow, you really could have ended up with a messed up sentence. Has this close call made you think back on what you want to do with your life? It's time to think fast and think ahead because the next move you make could land you in places far worse than the halls or CYA.

## I Would Say to Obama

I would say to Obama I want to meet you, it would be the happiest moment in my life. I think you are so inspiring to me, you persevered in everything you did, you never gave up and you tried your hardest. I wanted to break down in tears and cry when I found out you were President.

Also, I wanted to say Thank you on not discriminating on Prop 8 because I think us lesbians, and also gay and bisexual people, have the right to get married (Because in the constitution it says NO DISCRIMINATION). I think it's wrong to discriminate, we don't hurt nobody we just want the right to get married. Marriage does not have to be between men and women. Marriage is love, it does not matter what gender it is and if they wanna talk about the bible it says DON'T JUDGE PEOPLE, ONLY God can judge me. And also the bible says don't have sex until you're married, look around, everybody's having sex without getting married. But everybody's judging gays, and lesbians, and bisexual's and that's wrong.

Well thanks for your time. I hope this letter gets to you.

-Palmida

**From The Beat:** We loved how you put it in terms that we all could understand. Hopefully the LGBT community is able to get the rights that they deserve and finally be apart of their neighborhoods without being discriminated against. We are all one community, one world, and we should all have the same rights.



## Dear Mr. President

Hello Mr. Obama, this is a 16 year young teenager from Santa Clara California.

I really would like to congratulate you for becoming president of the USA. I really hope that you can encourage people to keep making changes because just by you becoming president you already made a change, it proves that people in America are ready for change. But those who aren't they might never be so that's when people who can make change should start showing that were no longer in the past we're looking at now.

**-Samantha**

**From The Beat:** Great letter. If you were Obama what would you change first?

## Put On My Shoes

If the DA had to switch shoes with me and was stuck in here for multiple drunken mistakes he would probably not last as long as I have with the positive attitude that I think that I have.

If the DA had to deal with all the things that I have had to put up with, all the stupid people thinking that I am nothing but another juvenile screw-up, but if instead of just throwing me in here and making me wait a whole month before even giving me a sentence.

If the DA switched with me they would probably realize that there are probably some people that can't be fixed by just looking them up. And if I was a DA, instead of just thinking every single person that comes through the system will keep screwing up, I would give them one chance to switch their life around (which I plan to do myself) but if they don't then those are the people that deserve to stay in here.

**-Don't Judge Me**

**From The Beat:** Sounds like you have a good plan there, if you were the DA. Do you think the system will ever change the way it works? Do you think there's something you could do to change the system?

## Sacrifices, Good and Bad

If I want to change my future I will have to start by giving things up and start making small changes in the present.

For example, I want in my future a good job that brings in good, clean, money. But to do that I need to go to school, get good grades but if I want to get good grades I need to go home after school so that I can do my homework and study, instead of going out with my friend right after school smoking and drinking and then come home so messed up all I can do is eat and sleep, let alone do homework.

So the sacrifices I will have to make to get the good job with the clean money, that I can take pride in. I will need to stop smoking weed and drinking everyday because that is the biggest obstacle in my way other than these walls keeping me in.

But in a way I am glad to be locked up in here because I know that when I get out and will be on house arrest I will have no choice but to go home after school, stay clean, and get good grades and when all that is over I will find this whole experience has actually bettered me more than I thought possible.

**-Awoke**

**From The Beat:** It's hard to stop doing the things that were once fun for us but when that fun could land you in the halls then it shouldn't be too hard to make your decision. We have faith in you and we hope that you can turn your words into reality because in the end your decisions can either make or break you.

## If They Were On Our Shoes

What I think if the DA's, PO's, PD's or judges step into the cells that we live in or be us for a second.

I think it would make them wanna not give us that much time or send people to CYA or prison as often as they do to us nowadays.

I also think that rich people can't just step into the poor people's shoes. I think that they have to live it to experience it.

**-Elmo**

**From The Beat:** Well, you can be p[ar]t of the change if you choose to become a DA, PO, PD, or judge, you can then give young people a better chance to rehabilitate, better than being here. What kind of program would you create that can help our young generation to stay out of trouble?

## Dear Barack Obama

I really hope you change a lot about what is going on in the United States. My opinion is I don't think that they should try minors as adults and if they still are, I think they should have more programs for us instead of just sending us away for a really long time because what about the ones who want to change?

I think everybody deserves a second chance, Mr. Obama. So I really hope you can make a lot of change. TAKE CARE, GOD BLESS YOU. Sincerely,

**-Miranda**

**From The Beat:** This is a great letter for the president. What kind of programs do you think at risk youth are in need of? \

## What I Need To Sacrifice

Today I'm going to write about something I have to sacrifice for my future.

Something that I'm going to sacrifice to benefit my future is to stop selling drugs. By me being able to do this, it's going to help me stay out of jail and it's going to help me go down the right road and become someone important in life and not just another statistic.

**-Bb**

**From The Beat:** That's a good thought, but also think about an education for brighter future. With a good education you can get a better job and better chances to succeed and earn things in the proper way.

## What I Need To Sacrifice

What I have to sacrifice for a better future is giving up the things I do like for instance smoking, doing dumb stuff.

I need to stay focus on my schoolwork. I'm so close to graduate, I need to sacrifice, be quiet and stay on task just for a few more months and hopefully graduate. So I have to sacrifice my attitude towards my behavior to stay focus on what I need to do

**-Flea**

**From The Beat:** You're saying the things that you need to sacrifice for a better future. The question is: are you willing to do it? Is it in your plans?

## My Loved Ones

I've decided to write about being lucky which I do consider myself.

I believe I'm the luckiest person in the world.

I'm alive, I got a loving family, girlfriend and something to look forward to

when I get out. I feel that even though I'm here I'm happy.

There are a whole lot of people out there in worst situation.

Everything happens for a reason and it's up to you to make the best of it

**-Elemen**

**From The Beat:** You're right! There are a lot of people in bad shapes of situation. It seems like you got something that brings a smile in your face. Well, what are you willing to give up for them?

## The Question

The question is, when you look at the mirror do you see an error, maybe a bad habit, or, do you see the treasure inside? Forget the sins. Pause for a moment and find the message that makes you feel like a hero. Stop! Look at the clock. It's time to realize you are a beautiful child. Look at the mirror now.

-Alex

From The Beat: Good writing and good thinking, Alex. Have you always been comfortable looking at yourself? What did it take?

## Nothing Changes Overnight

I know that nothing changes over night. Sometimes it's extremely hard to change something when you are so used to it. I can't really imagine my life without drugs. It's going to take some time for all that to change. Nothing changes overnight.

-E

From The Beat: Obviously, you need some help with your drug problem. Remember that it is a sign of strength and growth to ask for help when you need it. We wish you good luck. Work hard. Stick with it.

## Best Gift I've Given On Valentines Day

The best thing I've done for a woman on Valentine's Day was break up with her. She was my girlfriend and I did not give her anything but some kisses. And that was it. It wasn't intentional. It just happened because it had to happen. I guess we weren't meant to be together.

-Dennis

From The Beat: There is wisdom in knowing when to change course, and when to keep on the same path. We bet you're both better off for the decision.

## Old Habits

The old habits run us into that same stone wall with no hope that we can get up when we fall. As children, we made errors and sins and didn't realize what we were getting ourselves into. But eventually, we pause and think about what we do. And a change in the air makes us change and we get to act like heroes.

-Dennis

From The Beat: Good poem. You're already our hero.

## I'm Trying

Trippin' on society  
Always having cops lie to me.  
They call me a criminal,  
lock me up like an animal.  
But to myself - I'm phenomenal.  
I'm trying to take responsibility  
and I know with this liability  
I'm gonna do the best in me.  
And I'm feinding  
to be treated like a human being.  
I never keep my body leaning.  
I stand up straight  
and I have faith.  
Keeping my mind straight, too.

-A

From The Beat: Cool A. Great rhymes. You do your best and it really will work out.

## No Heart

I never had anybody to give my heart to on any Valentines Day, until this year. But I'm locked up, and yet she is still the sweetest little pudding a young man could ever want. I really love the woman.

So, the best gift for Valentines Day is my new puppy love and sweet heart whose name is like a silky cloud from heaven. Due to my incarceration, I have not been able to give this poetic offering to my babe. But just the thought of my girl has my blood flowing like Niagara Falls.

-Nathan

From The Beat: Nathan, we're happy for you. We hope you know the story about Niagara Falls and the barrel. So don't get too excited.



## Marijuana And Cancer

I think that because it's only a possible link between the two that it is not enough to stop the use of this substance. I'm sure people only wear seatbelts because they know, or are related to, someone who has seen the severity of a car crash. I think from my own experience that many of the young men, and women, are willing to risk their health because they don't really know that what they use, or experience, might affect them in the long run. Or, they want to have fun, or, just don't care. It's hard for me to criticize or point the finger.

-Nathan

From The Beat: You're probably right, Nathan. We hope you will use common sense. Read the study. Become a voice of reason.



## Breaking The Rules

Always breaking the rules.  
Not fiction, just facts.  
So close to the edge  
I can hear screams echo  
in the distance.  
Never catch me again.  
I'll disappear in the shadows.  
You'll only see my dust.

-Omar

**From The Beat:** We admire your poem but we have a few words of caution for the narrator (whoever that might be). If we had a dollar for every time we've heard ...they'll never catch me again... we'd be able to buy the Empire State Building ten times over, or maybe, The Brooklyn Bridge.

## A Trip

It's a trip I'm here looking at white walls and bricks.  
I used to get high and fly like a pigeon.  
Now I'm reading and talking about religion.  
I have all these problems. I just want to solve them.  
I want to get out soon and eat with a metal spoon.  
I'm in a small space, getting a taste  
of how life can be a blur and thick like fur.  
Feels like I'm trapped in a web, half dead.  
I never had wealth. Always in bad health.  
I wish I could be reborn so I could survive on this earth.

-Paris

**From The Beat:** Top rate poem. We would love to see more. Terrific writing.

## Encounter With A Spider Web

I knocked my head on a spider web.  
I fell down and when I woke up  
everything was a blur.  
I got mad, picked up a brick  
and threw it through it.  
All this happened on earth.

-Edward

**From The Beat:** Terrific poem Edward.

## Thank You

I just want to say thank you to Jill and Gwen from The Beat Within for the book "Forgotten Memories" by Art Rodriguez. It is a great book about Art's life. It's a sequel to "East Side Dreams". "Forgotten Memories" is similar to the first book. They both talk about Art's teenage years, and when he was younger. It's about the problems he had to overcome and what he went through with his parents and his brothers and sisters. So thank you Jill and Gwen for such a great book.

-Paris

**From The Beat:** They both say: you're very welcome.

## He Threw It

He threw that brick, then tripped, got a bump on his head.

He thought he saw a pigeon. They gave him a spoonful of medicine. His vision blurred. He dreamt he was stuck in a spider's web, had lost his wealth, didn't even know he was on this earth.

-Ruben

**From The Beat:** We really like your poem. What inspired this work?

## Is The Soul Solid, Like Iron?

(title from a line by Mary Oliver)  
The soul is as weak,  
or as strong, as you make it.  
But if your heart is right,  
so will be your soul.

-Nathan

**From The Beat:** Lovely poem Nathan.

## The Voice Of Knowledge

I like the voice of knowledge. It's the type of wisdom I've always wanted to learn. Everyone needs to know about life. It tells you to have faith and to love everything you do. I have a different perspective on my life. I've realized that life is a story, that it's what you make of it. I am going to change my life with my faith.

I recommend this book. It's what everyone needs. It's taught me about faith, love, respect, and understanding. When I say faith, I mean never giving up, and believing in yourself. By love I mean to love everything you do, and everything people do for you - to have a love that will stand out in anything. To Respect is to appreciate everything in your life, and everyone's life. When I say understand, I mean to comprehend the meaning of your life.

I would like to read a book that is about philosophy, that asks questions about life and the world. I want a book that gives me knowledge about my surroundings.

-Damian

**From The Beat:** Those are wonderful aspirations Damian. We'll look for a book, or two, that might help you on your quest.

## Just Another Day

I'm stuck in the hall, looking at a toilet and a sink.  
And these cold walls.

I have to maintain without my girl.

I have to change my ways, if I want to get out.

Some days, it seems I need weed and brew, just to stay cool.

I'm addicted to the blocks and avenues.

Soon, I'm to be in a group home, because I'm in this alone - just lonely me.

I have the qualities of a poet, a smoker, and a G.

I have to get my stuff together because I can't live like this forever.

I need to stand tall and stay out of the hall.

I need to calm down or soon I'll be county bound.

That's what I've got to say. It's just another day.

-P

**From The Beat:** Sounds like you might be addicted to more than the block. Are you open to getting some help with your drinking problem. By the way, who are your five favorite poets? Can you answer that question? Maybe we should find an anthology for you.

## Three Topics In One

When I get out, something I have to sacrifice is my behavior, because if I don't, God knows what would happen to me. But one thing I would want for me is trying to go home and get enrolled in school.

If rich people put themselves in poor people's shoes, they wouldn't like it. They would feel cold. They will be dirty and no bed to sleep in, no money to get nothing to eat.

If someone kill someone and go to jail and go to court the next day and get out, that will be lucky. Unlucky, if you steal something from someone, but before they steal something, they look around before they take it and when they take it, someone is in the back of them.

**-Socorro**

**From The Beat:** First, Socorro, please choose only one topic to write about. You chose three topics, and didn't write enough about any of them. So we put your pieces together. Next time just choose one topic and write a lot more about it. As to what you wrote, how could killing someone and going to jail, or stealing something from someone, ever be considered lucky? Are you here because of bad luck or because of bad choices you made?

## Free Me

When I'm free I don't trip  
Because I don't gotta be in my room countin' bricks  
The same routine every day  
Come out, eat, go to sleep  
I try so hard  
But I can't stay away from the back of a cop car  
Lookin' through a glass window wishin' I had some indo  
San Francisco, where I was born and raised  
I pray I could stay out of here someday

**-Lil' Husalah**

**From The Beat:** How does wishin' for that indo help you stay out of the back of a cop car? Seems like you should use the forced time you have to spend here to think about some of those reasons you keep getting arrested, and think hard about how to avoid them. The system will not change, so unless you do, prepare for more of the same.

## One Love To All My Loved Ones

Much love to all my loved ones  
Good night to all my haters  
To the ones I love, I'll see you later

**-Chalups**

**From The Beat:** Sweet little poem, but really too short. Next time, add more details. If your loved ones could write a poem to you, what would they say?

## The Studio

I like going to the studio, because I can express my feelings. Then, when we finish the song, we listen to it from the beginning and rate it from one through ten. We be like, "Ugh, that's tight." Another reason I like rapping is because I just like the sound of music, ranging from R&B to rap to hip-hop.

I got put on to music by my uncle. I got a lot of rappers that I like. I will name a few. I like Messy Marv, Husalah, Young Curt, Mac Dre, 2 Pac, Lil' Obei, J Mak, Young Bari, Keak Da Sneak, J Diggs, and many more. I want to get in the studio with a couple of friends. My favorite song is Mac Dre, "U Beezy" and Husalah', "Murder On My Mind," and Messy Marv, "Thug Life," and "Sei Love." That's it. Peace, Beat. Oh, yeah, RIP to the homie, Mac Dre.

**-Lil' Husalatt**

**From The Beat:** Can you write a new rap for The Beat. What do you like to write about the most? Do you have fans for your raps? What do they tell you after they listen to one of your raps? Are you working on CD? As soon as you're home, we hope you get on it, and leave the rest alone.



## My Struggles, Now No Love

All I can do is think about my struggles  
Wishin' I could step back and really stand tall instead of tumble  
While I was in the hospital  
I sho' wasn't alone  
And to the people that wasn't there, call me up ova the phone  
Twelve days in a coma, I was beat with a baseball bat  
Got ran out of the mall 'cause of my certain football hat  
Ya boy been shot at — not sayin' it to brag  
My boy was messin' wit' a bobber  
Turned around and got the clap

I was on the run one day in San Rafael at the Mic  
It was Dread Heads, police and all kind of fights  
My bro met a girl  
Been together for the crazy  
And it's crazy... only fifteen with a baby

I almost lost my life as a new teen  
Now I'm fifteen  
No females to hug. so love to me is a mystery  
I've been away from home since I was put in the hospital  
My love is the size of the mouse called Stuart Little

My experience is the reason  
For my fatal decision

**-Obie**

**From The Beat:** If you want to be around females, you're going to have to figure out how to stay out of this place. As long as you keep putting yourself behind walls, the only females you'll have will be in your dreams! What's fatal decision you made?



## She Makes Me Lucky!

I think I am unlucky because of my lifestyle. I never had a dad and my mom got lost cause of that damn dope she was on. So I am on my own. It's been like five or six years like that with no one to care for me. I was forced to live a thuggish life.

The street mentality is what I know. Robbing people and selling dope, that's the street code. On the other hand, I am lucky cause two years ago the Lord gave me a little girl who I love so much. That was the happiest day of my life and I thank him for that! My little girl is incredible and makes me so lucky.

**-Bryan**

**From The Beat:** No young person deserves to experience what you had to go through growing up. Your daughter is a symbol of hope, and a gift, that you can make your life better, and she is lucky to have you too.

## Unfinished

I feel unfinished  
Will my future be diminished  
Or come back to this bad business  
I'm doing some time  
But I've learned to keep this as a reminder  
In mind  
I will stay on the grind  
But in the right way  
My lesson got me stressing  
Putting my mom through worries  
The homies that I used to call brothers  
Didn't care if I stay here a few summers  
I hope the judge will see my eyes  
And see the suffering  
And just say release period.

**-Ryan**

**From The Beat:** It seems like you've learned a lot from this experience. We hope things work out for when you see the judge.

## Giving It Up

Giving up my gang life would be a big sacrifice because the only way out is to be six feet under, so I don't think that I can do it. But that is the way that it should be.

The one thing that keeps me from doing it is my boys because they are more just than family, they are like brothers to me. I don't think that I will ever retire; I think that I would just probably have a lot of kids and then lay low.

**-Doubtful Guy**

**From The Beat:** Everyone has to go down some day because we are not immortal. Do you want to spend your whole life avoiding death, or do you want to spend it living? We would like to ask you what do you want for your children? Do you care if they have to live in the same neighborhood and violent condition that you are living in? Do you think that your children will have an easy time being a free human being and making choices in an environment that is as rigid as your gang...either you side with the gang or you die?

## Ever Since

Ever since you left me alone I haven't been the same. I feel like a lost child going insane. Mama I love you and you know that's true so why do I feel so sad and blue? I know I am so suppose to be strong while your gone but it just so hard when you're all alone. I sit in the cell wondering what you'll think but all in the end it's up to me.

Mama I'm sorry I let you down but one day I'll be around until that day. Mama I want you to know that I love you and this is true. Your guardian angel and I hope to see you soon.

**-Tiffany**

**From The Beat:** Focus up on yourself and let your momma be. She can look after herself. You need to work on yourself and do what you need to do to get out and to stay out of Juvi.

## Struggle

If a rich man put themselves in a poor man's shoes, then for sure they would understand what it means to struggle. Not going to college or finishing high school will definitely make a difference.

A day in a poor person's shoes would make them understand why people do what they do on the streets. Whether it is selling drugs or prostitution. They would learn that it is not as easy as they think to put food on the table, not only for themselves but for their families as well. People struggle, not because they are lazy, but because it is hard when you do not have the right education for the job that you want.

The families that struggle are out getting their hustle on. Trying to make some money for rent or whatever it is that they need. Basically struggling would teach anyone to get their education.

**-Kast**

**From The Beat:** But being able to get an education takes staying out of trouble and being responsible for paying to go there too. These are hurdles you should think about as well.



## Getting Released

Today, my public defender came up to me and said I was going to be released on JED. It's a one-year program that has mini programs within the main program. When he told me this, I was surprised! Was this really happening? That's all I could think about.

The hard part will be to give up all the negative things in my life, things that make me happy, but the funny thing is I ain't tripping about having to change for the better. I'm willing to change if it means being out and being free. I don't know why I didn't realize this sooner, but it's better late than never. I'm also going to forgive the people who told on me. I ain't going to let hatred build up in me. People have to learn to forgive one another. I did. Believe me it is easy to do if you try.

**-George**

**From The Beat:** Congratulations on getting out! Making those changes won't be easy, but keep working on it and you'll get there.

## I'm Not Bitter

I wrote you a poem today  
Still I don't know what to say  
The day I was put away, we started to fade  
The look in my eyes is still and gone  
Never to know why you left after all  
I hold on to our memories squeezing them tight  
being in your arms felt so amazingly right  
I'm sitting in my bed sobbing through the nights  
You know the only question to God is why?  
I thought it was meant to be. Still I try  
to grab the moments you made me feel fuzzy inside  
Forget us being best friends this is where  
it has to end  
You know I'm not bitter. I just want you  
DEAD!

-Jaymee

**From The Beat:** Resentments are like poison. We use them to get back at other people but all we do is infect ourselves.

## Giving It Up

If I want to have a better future, I would have to change a lot. I would have to give up my second family, which is the gang. My criminal mind and I would have to be positive. I don't know what's keeping me from making the sacrifice. When I think about what my mom and grandmother did for me, it makes me want to sacrifice anything for them but yet I haven't.

I guess I'm still growing up from my kid mind, but I do know I have grown up over the years. I am willing to give up the gang life and whatever they want me to give up. I need to change in life and succeed for me and for them. I'm about to graduate from school and am looking forward to college. I got a few positive friends in life, and I accept one of them as a brother. He's on his way to Iraq soon and I hope to see him soon—best of luck to him. He wants me to do good and I want him to do good.

-Lil Lophy

**From The Beat:** It sounds like you've been doing some serious thinking, which has helped you realize what you need to change about yourself in order to have a better future. Many good things can come your way when you graduate, so start making those important sacrifices now. Good luck, and thanks for writing The Beat.

## Sacrificing For My Future

I need to make sacrifices to make my future better. Nothing is going to be held back. It's just that I make the bad choices. When I think back I feel bad because my mother's sacrificed her life for me.

She was only 16 years old when she had me. She could have had an abortion and continue to lead her regular life and go to high school but instead she had me. She gave up school and her fun times at a young age. She has struggled so much to give me the best she can. It hurts me when she has to see me in here. So for her, I got my high school diploma and certified at a young age to be a secretary.

But I made a bad choice. Hopefully, I'll be home soon and for her I'm going to work and help her in what ever way I can.

-Blancaliccette

**From The Beat:** We agree that if we want to improve our lives, we will have to do some things we don't necessarily like and we may have to stop doing destructive things we enjoy. We commend you for graduating but we want to remind you that although your mother may be proud of your accomplishments, you are the one who will reap the rewards of your accomplishment. Live your life and do the right things for yourself. It is your life. Live it.

## Changing Shoes

I think the rich should put themselves in poor people's shoes so they can see the life they live. They don't have full plates every night. They have to make ends meet any way they can. It is especially hard for the parents too so that's why the rich should start appreciating what they have.

Judges and POs should also put themselves in our shoes so they can see the problems and challenges we face everyday!

-Joshua

**From The Beat:** Thanks for sharing Joshua. We agree there is so much for people to learn from one another, and this is one of them.

## Both Parents

I think I am a lucky kid because there are a lot of kids in the world that do not have both parents. But lucky for me I have both of my parents and I love them and they love me. On top of that, they are still together. I'm lucky because my parents want me to live in a good place and stay in school. I don't want to offend anyone who doesn't have both parents.

To all the kids who don't have any parents, or maybe your parents are separated, just have hope that one day they'll be back together. If you don't have any parents, you have my sympathy and I am sorry.

-Binky

**From The Beat:** You're right; many kids live in single-parent homes while others have no parents. You've made an important realization about what keeps a family strong. Thanks for offering your support to others who are not in the same boat as you.

## Making A Sacrifice

I know what I have to sacrifice in my life, but I don't think I can. One of the things I know I must change is my attitude against my teachers. I say this because now I'm having a daughter and I know I need an education to get a good job. Now I have a new responsibility, a new challenge, and I am willing to do anything for my baby girl.

When I say anything, I mean I will give up my home, friends, and life just so I can see my daughter be successful in life. I know what my mom had to go through when she was in my position. I love my daughter with all my heart.

-Antonio

**From The Beat:** You must have had experiences with teachers in the past. But please know there are many teachers out there with a passionate heart and desire to help you. If you willing to make changes for your daughter, start by ensuring that you get your education.

## Midnight Candy

When you look at me I get shy  
When you talk to me I lush  
When you take my hand I get a little scared  
When you kiss me my heart starts to pump  
When you say Oi love you: I can't breathe.  
When you tell me everything will be alright  
I start to believe you.  
When you say I'm your only one I hope it's true.  
When you say I'm your only one I hope it's true.  
When you say by my side hope it's forever.  
When you leave I cry.  
When you tell me good night I don't want to sleep.  
When you ask me to be yours I will  
When you say you will never have another bitch but me.  
Damn straight you won't.

-Bethany

**From The Beat:** Wow! We see Juvi isn't all that bad after all? Appreciate the gifts life offers everyday. God bless and thanks for sharing.



## I'm Lucky

I consider myself lucky simply because I am alive. I wake up every morning to a bed, water, food and shelter so I'm lucky. I may be locked up but there are some people that would like to be locked up rather than where they're staying.

I do sometimes feel like I'm unlucky but I have to be thankful for what I have which is life. I have been lucky to get out of an abusive home but unlucky that I could not bring my sisters with me. The luckiest thing that happened to me is surviving being thrown out of a moving car.

My step-mom threw me out of the car and I cracked my skull on the cement. The doctors said I could have died if the crack was any bigger so I am lucky to be alive today.

**-Samantha**

**From The Beat:** Yes, God bless. No matter our situation we can decide and we can see ourselves as lucky and blessed. Making this decision makes us feel better. A lot of life and the way it rolls out is all a result of how we think about it. We think we're lucky and we are grateful for your thoughts.

## What Homies?

For me, the sacrifice would be to drop the "homies" I finally came to realize that they weren't even friends that I thought they were. Turns out those ladies were some flipping snitches, flipping the script the about the situation and making it light on them and giving me the short end of the stick. They'll be there as long as there's still some grass but once it's gone and you get caught they'll let you take the rap and rot.

**-Alsiha**

**From The Beat:** It's strange how important it is to depend on others when we are up to mischief but when we walk the right path, we need not have anyone else with us. When we walk in righteousness we do not need anyone else with us but when we play games, we need our friends to play them with.

## Unlucky

My life is very unlucky and not safe  
It's unlucky because of my race  
I'm in juvenile hall because I had a chance to walk away  
But instead I chose to stay, that's why I'm locked up today

Luck is a wall that I cannot see  
Because it's hidden deep inside of me  
I am unlucky and want to ignite  
Ignite and go crazy like dynamite  
I feel I have a ghost lurking at my insides  
I still feel unlucky because prides holds my side

**-Kevin**

**From The Beat:** Being in juvenile hall can make you feel stress and anguish. But don't feel you are alone, many writers to The Beat also share your same feeling. We also want to encourage you to think about how you don't have to rely on luck to move through this world and your life.

## No Place Like Home

I have two weeks. I don't know if I can hold on. I'm scared. Now I know there's no place like home. And no one cares about you more than your family. Just to see their faces. How I hurt them is really hurting me.

**-Chris**

**From The Beat:** It hurts to be away from your family. But keep faith and know that this time will pass.

## The World Would Be Better

I think if the rich put themselves in the shoes of the poor, the world would be a better place. Less people would be poor because most of those rich people who put themselves in the shoes of the poor would give more money to charities. Rich people wouldn't be as greedy and would be more willing to share their money.

**-Shane**

**From The Beat:** When we put ourselves in the other person's shoe, we begin to feel compassion for what they go through. Your theory about the world being a better place is very cool!

## Mom Knows

My life was hard to control  
Another blunt I rolled  
Once my eyes were glazed over  
I felt so much better  
Mom said stay away from drugs  
So I picked up a bottle  
Misunderstand me as I start to waddle  
Friends came up with pills and shrooms  
Then I was flying across the room  
Now I'm back  
When I'm on the streets  
that was whack  
Now I know for a fact  
When my mom says stay away from drugs  
She knows it's hard  
but she means it with love

**-Jaymee**

**From The Beat:** Listen to your Mama. Nothing good happens when we started to abuse drugs. Only our money disappears as we chase an escape from life. It is better to just face it and make it good.

## Would You?

If I were poor, would you still love me?  
If I were rich, would you still love me?  
If I was on the streets and I didn't have any money, would you still love me?  
If I were still gang-banging, would you still love me?  
If I'm locked down, would you still love me?  
If I was murdered, would you still love me?

**-Maurice**

**From The Beat:** Such bold questions! Perhaps you are trying to find trust in someone.

## The Way I Act Hurts Me

The Way I act keeps me in and out of juvenile hall. I think it's because I listen to people that keep wanting to bring me down and if I would just listen to the people that want to keep me out of trouble. Maybe I wouldn't be here. Sometimes I feel unlucky because I'm here, locked up. I can't eat when I want, wear my own clothes and just do me and feel free but I'm on the out. I'm really lucky because I can do some of what I want to do. That makes me lucky in a way. I just want to go home.

**-Special**

**From The Beat:** It is never good when our actions can limit us by getting us in trouble. Actions should be a means of freedom. An action is triggered by a thought. We can use this time to meditate on the the actions we will be taking by contemplating our reason beforehand.

## What I Think

If a rich person had the chance to put themselves in the shoes of the poor, it would probably help them understand what a poor person has to go through just to make it through the day. They would really know what life is about when money is not always there. Just because rich people try to put themselves in a poor position, they're still going to be the same as before. It's just that for some people, it's a bigger struggle to live like a rich person.

Now if a rich person were to get locked up, what would he do there? Is he going to use his money to say he's not guilty? I don't think so, but he will learn that it's not all about money. Money is the best, though, everyone loves it but some people are just different because of where they are from.

I think if a rich person were to put themselves in the shoes of a poor person, that person would kind of understand how bad it is to be poor and would probably never want to be in that situation again.

-Jesus

**From The Beat:** It's not fun to be locked up or poor, but you make a good point about how switching sides would create more understanding. Thanks for sharing your perspective.

## Lucky Or Not

I would have to say that the unluckiest person is myself. Everywhere I go and whoever I am with, I have bad luck. Most of the time the bad luck gets me put in here. Even when I am in here I have bad luck. I could be on my way getting out, and I could get into a fight and then get rebooked, and it has happened. The only luck I think I have is getting with girls.

-Doubtful Guy

**From The Beat:** Are you sure that bad things happen to you because of pure luck, or is there something that maybe you are doing to yourself to make bad things happen to you? Also, have you thought about the intentions or purpose behind some of your past behavior?

## Good News

I got into the program I've been writing about every week! That's good news. When I get out, I'm going to have to sacrifice a lot if I want to stay out and do my program, but I am willing to do it. I'd have to give up smoking in order to be successful.

I have now realized that my family and loved ones are more important than anything and if I'm going to be putting in work, it's going to be for them and no one else.

-Thor

**From The Beat:** We're happy for you Thor! Good things will come your way as long as you avoid negative things. Take care of yourself out in the world.



## Reuniting with my family.

I have had a bad relationship with my family. The last two years my family and I have had a split up. I will be reunited with my family once and for all. No more on the run. I leave this place of probation because I will be 18 years old and now I'm a grown up woman. No one can tell me what to do except my mom and dad.

Me and my dad are closest out of my family. I have not seen him for a year because he has been locked up so now we are going to be best friends again. Love always.

-Destiny

**From The Beat:** That's wonderful that you are reuniting with your family. There is no substitute for family because we only have one family.

## I'm Getting Out Today

Damn, I'm getting out today. I'm so happy. I'm never going to come back. I just want to tell my homegirls in here that I'm going to miss them. Keep your head up girls. They know who they are. I don't want to fight anymore because if I do then I'm gonna come back here to JJC. Well that's it. Peace out.

-Giggles

**From The Beat:** We hope you stay out but it takes a lot more than wanting to stay out to stay out. We need to change who we hang with, we need to change how we think, we need to change how we react.

## Can They Do It?

The rich people think about the poor because some people have money. That is why some people work in the fields to get money and some people work in an office, for other people.

Poor people need to work more than rich people so that's why they work harder than the rich people. The poor need to educate their children so that they can help them not have to work so hard.

-Ulises

**From The Beat:** People who want to be comfortable in life need to work hard to get what they want no matter how rich or poor they are. And working hard requires skills that you can't get while being locked up.

## Sacrifices

I would sacrifice anything to get myself home. I would give up all but one friend. I would give up cigarettes and weed and whatever else it takes. I am 12 years old and I've already messed up so bad that I'm in Juvi. I personally believe that I need to go home to be a good role model for my sisters.

When I get out, I'm not coming back. I know that there are some things that I can never take back. But I also know that there are other things that I can fix.

-Denii

**From The Beat:** That's the way they say the wise one goes; she knows what she can change and what she can't and she does the things she can and let's the other things go.

## Never Giving Up

That's what I would have to give to change my life and future. What is keeping me from giving up is the fact that it makes everything I love so much better. The sacrifices that my grandparents made up for me make me feel a lot of guilt when I don't change but I continue to do the same.

My grandparents are giving up time, money, and love for me and that's what I am willing to give up for them if need be. But not my drug of choice.

-Thizz

**From The Beat:** The drugs you choose to do can take away your ability to repay your grandparents, are you sure you want to take that risk?



## Your Love

My life is filled with love  
 Especially the love for you  
 Love is in my heart  
 It's starting to break through  
 It's starting to flow through  
 My blood  
 I can see it my love  
 It's starting to come out  
 Pretty soon the words  
 I love you  
 Are gonna come out my mouth  
 This crush for you is deep  
 It's down  
 It's deep  
 So deep, that you can't measure  
 My very love using feet  
 It's clear to me  
 What I can see is my love  
 For you  
 My love for you  
 Can inspire what we can do  
 It is also based on  
 What we been through  
 What we been through  
 Are the greatest series of events  
 So to not love you  
 It wouldn't be likely  
 It wouldn't make sense  
 But at least my life is filled with love  
 From all kinds of people  
 You can see it  
 You can spot it from a mile away  
 Just like you were an eagle  
 So I'm gonna live this life of mine  
 That's filled with joy and pain  
 But please baby, without your love  
 It wouldn't be the same

-Devonte

**From The Beat:** We sense there is a deep longing in your poem, but there is also some sadness. It's good to write it out and not keep those emotions inside. Thanks for sharing this beautiful piece.

## Addicted To Mary Janes

When will I change? Only God knows. Will I go back to the street, runnin' into the five-o, on the outs. It's real tough to stay away from all the drugs that I will see all day. Right now I am locked up and ain't thinking of her, but Mary Jane is the only way I know how to calm my nerves. I know that I am addicted.

My grandma doesn't like it. But it's my stress, and I can't fight it. She is not the reason that I am in here, but she didn't help me. I am hurting my family, but most of all myself, when will I change? Only God knows. I have my mind set strong, on not getting blown.

-Problems

**From The Beat:** When we don't want to do something, we should replace it with something else, so what can you do instead, that can help you grow and be happy? We noticed that you focus on the drugs, the outward behavior, and what's happening outside of yourself. However, you did spend a moment to talk about calm nerves, stress, and hurt. We encourage you to think about what's happening on the inside, your emotions, why you feel anxiety. Spend this time to understand yourself.

## Sorry Daddy

Sorry Daddy for growing up so fast. Sorry for giving up on myself. Sorry Daddy for not being Daddy's Lil Gurl no more. Also Daddy, sorry for yelling at you.

Also sorry for hurting Momma. If I could I would say sorry for giving my love away. Sorry for walking off on you.

Also sorry Daddy for telling you that you are dumb. Sorry Daddy for making the same mistakes you made. If I could, I would tell you that I love you and ask you to forgive you. Sorry Daddy. I love you always.

-Jamikka

**From The Beat:** We admire your willingness to accept responsibility and your willingness to ask for forgiveness. We hope and pray that you receive it and if those who can, don't forgive you then we hope and pray that you forgive yourself. Peace.

## Ninety More Days

I went to court on Thursday and they gave me a pretty good deal. Instead of giving me a year in boot camp they gave me three months. I almost got two months but some other stuff came up and I got thirty more days. I have done forty five days so far, before I got committed and it's not even that bad here. Even now it is not that bad but I don't want to come back so I can do productive things in life.

When I get out I am just going to kick it with the homies. I am going to finish my year and a half on probation and try to stay away from dealing.

-Daniel

**From The Beat:** You are very lucky to get a break, and the wise thing to do is to keep in mind that you may not be so lucky next time! So don't take the wrong chances!

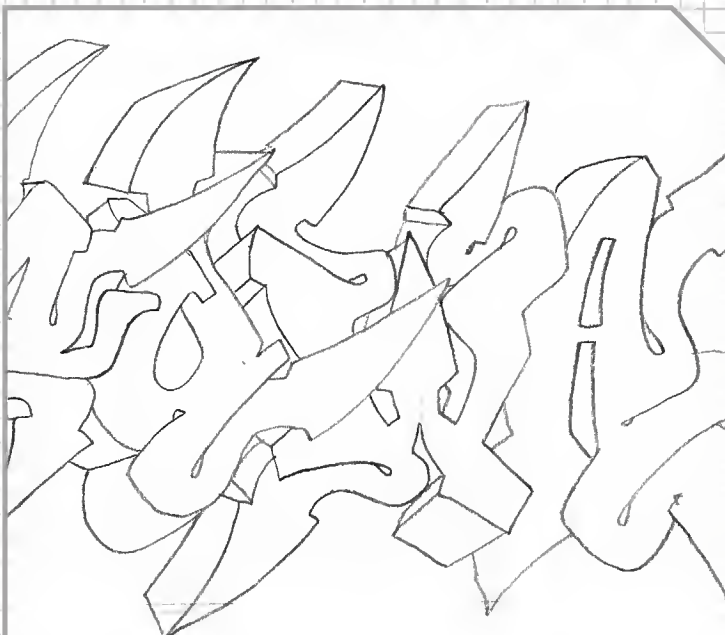
## The Lucky One

I am lucky because I still have my mom here supporting me and even though my sisters are with CPS, I am lucky they are still alive.

There are many things I guess I am lucky for, and one of those things is life, and life goes on even though I am incarcerated. It doesn't mean life stops. If you think it does, then think again cause this is just the beginning. You can use your time wisely here and get educated, or you can use your time to rebuild trust and love with your mom, like me.

-Puppet

**From The Beat:** Your piece inspires! Each week, we see you are really making an effort to reconnect with your mom. We hope she knows how lucky she is to have a son who wants to make things better.



## Lucky And Unlucky

I am writing about being lucky and unlucky because I myself am both. This is my first time here, so I can't say what I have been through much yet. One day my big brother had to go to county, and now he is on parole. The police came looking for him but he was in custody two nights before that. They searched my room and found some stuff so I had to come in.

Court released me with a monitor. I violated that, so now I am in here and my court date is next week. I know that I am not at fault because they searched my room without consent and papers, so I am hoping that the judge will drop the charges.

The worst thing about it is that I wasn't even on probation so I hope I get out of here because this isn't the place for me. I love my family and my baby girl too much to be here.

-Brandon

**From The Beat:** You are lucky that you have a brother whose struggles you can avoid in your own life. You only make yourself unlucky when you do things that you should have in the first place.

## Raving

This is what I live for. I live for the weekend. Forget a nine to five job. All I want to do is to have a fun time. I literally have the time of my life every time I go to one. It is a life-time experience, and once you do you will never want to give up. I don't really have a reason not to do these things.

My mom is the root of all of the reasons why I do the stuff that I do, so that's not a reason because of all of the stuff that she has done to me. But I guess maybe my dad is a good reason to not do these things, because he has done a lot for me and I do want to pay him back for that.

-Wolfe

**From The Beat:** Showing others respect will help you to respect yourself. How can you show him respect, because that will pay him back for sure! We would like you to think a bit about your comment about how all you want to do is to have a fun time. We would like encourage you to ask the people who seem to enjoy their life and seem to be healthy...do they work, do they spend time to have fun, what are their friendships and family relationships like...?

## Marijuana

I think that I should give up drugs to make my future better. I have been smoking herb since sixth grade. I was introduced to it by my older cousin. I have too many problems, that is what I think keeps me from making that sacrifice. Usually when I have problems I smoke pot most of the time.

My parents have given up a lot of things for me, I bet. I don't think that I could give up smoking. I am addicted to it, I think. I tried to stop for my girlfriend, because she is there for me. But I couldn't. But maybe I could stop.

-Oso

**From The Beat:** What other things can you do when you get stressed out by problems, that won't get you into trouble?

## Just To Rap

They try to stop me but police don't even have a chance Don't even try it 'cause my pistol poppin' out my pants And it's itchin' to pop on those tryin' to cap on me You can't catch me 'cause I am trigga finga happy. But I can't help it.

I told you that it is just the way I am.

If you don't get it by now

I will make you understand.

-Lil' Whodini

**From The Beat:** We would like to see you give yourself a chance to live your life, but if you don't want that chance for yourself, life will never get better. If you had a choice to choose between a life that is changing, evolving and learning OR a life that is fixed, "it is just the way I am," which would you choose?

## Can The Rich Put Themselves In The Shoes Of The Poor

Na they can't do it they wouldn't know what to do if they was in their situation because they wouldn't know how to live with a little bit of money especially since they use to getting everything they want so they won't know how to save money.

-Real Talk

**From The Beat:** What would they learn if they tried?

## I'm Not Feeling The Topics

What up Beat this ya boy Happy Feet doing it live up in the hall. Well today like usual I'm not feeling the topics so I'm just gonna write what's on my mind but yeah let me tell you about this girl I know on the outs she's hella fine and she's really nice and this song is stuck in my head...

-Jesse

**From The Beat:** We had to edit your song... It was not appropriate for the peaceful intentions of the Beat! We hope this girl on the outs is a good influence for you.

## Notebook and a Pen

I'm in challenge tryna finish this track note book and a pen always on my lap boy I'm never faking the boys I'm shaken because everywhere I go I got the trunk earth quaken fasho lil Alex gotta bring home that bacon every dang thang I do is straight money making and man I got a all pro team like John Madden beezy slapping irby beats clappen man what is it let me get her digits I'll pay her a visit because that's just how we do it in the town.

-Lil' Dopey

**From The Beat:** We had to edit your piece a little, but hopefully we still got the flavor of your piece.

## Can The Rich Put Themselves In Our Shoes

The rich people could not put themselves in our shoes. They won't last 30 days in our shoes. They probably get on dope. Real dope.

-Pooh

**From The Beat:** What would they find so difficult they'd have to escape on dope? Is there anything they might find, in your shoes that is positive and would help them?



## Sacrifice If Necessary

The only time I would sacrifice anything that I do or anything at all if it's had to be done. For example, if I had a baby on the way and I knew I couldn't take care of it unless I change and get a job then maybe I would have to sacrifice a lot.

The sacrifice is going to be a lot because when you try to stop doing one thing it ends up to be everything you do. That's a real big step in life but if its important enough then its worth to give it a chance, but if it aint then most likely I'm not going to make the sacrifice.

**-Chow Main**

**From The Beat:** You make the point that everything is connected one way or another in our lives. Steps end up being more far reaching than they look at first. You'd change everything for a baby, which is important. Could you think of your own life and potential as being as fresh and worthy of commitment? You and your life count too.

## Good Comes to You

Yes I believe in luck most people say you can just be blessed! But when you're doing bad and sinning every day and good still comes to you I think that's luck.

I remember one time I was going around fighten, stolen, roben all nite the next da I hit tha block early before every one got there and did it live all day and nite.

**-Cash**

**From The Beat:** When did that luck run out? Sometimes if you look at the really big picture luck in the moment looks different. Maybe one guy doesn't get caught up (and seems lucky), and one guy does—and one guy ends up changing, and having a life...and the other guy doesn't.

## Lucky And Unlucky Sacrifices

What's up Beat? Sacrificing for my future, see sacrificing is a big deal in life, sacrifices can be made for the good or for the worst.

Many people have sacrificed a lot for me and I've done the same, now I need to sacrifice a habit not just for me, but for everyone else around me.

And if you ask me I'm an unlucky person, that's just one view from me. I could sacrifice something to do good, but sometimes after that, my luck just drops.

My ninja (m) is the luckiest person I know. He do everything that I do an more an never gets into it with the law, an when I just side step on that line, I come to find myself hemped up on a curb, but guess time catches up with everyone.

**-Ali**

**From The Beat:** We think your hard work on yourself will get you a lot farther than relying on luck, good or bad! If you could see the really big picture of your life you might evaluate your lucky or unlucky times differently.

## Real Boys Get Real Lucky

I remember when I had only like 30 dollars then I went to go shoot dice and at the end of the game I had like 230 dollars. I got lucky that day.

Another time when I was only like in the six grade and I seen this girl she was in the 8th grade she was bad too. At first I was scared to say something but then I called her over where I was and I snatched her from somebody.

I was mess'n wit her for a cool little minute. We was mess'n wit' each other for like two years--I was the luckiest man on the team.

**-Lil' Rashawn**

**From The Beat:** Maybe it wasn't luck! Maybe you're a great guy and she could see that...The thing about luck is it can be bad or good right? If you are a good guy people will respond to that, it's not luck.

## Forget The Rich Man

The rich man won't be able to have the shoes of a poor man

because they don't now how it is to be poor.

The rich people don't care 'bout us they wanna run every thang around them because they think money is every thang. So the poor always find a way to get money.

**-Sleepy D**

**From The Beat:** How will things change if there's no understanding? Do you have any ideas of what might communicate between rich and poor?

## Lucky Or Unlucky

I've been lucky in some situations with staff, some staff really work with you and treat you like you're in a group home like the real definition of New Foundations, and they know who they are... some staff in here, just come here just to get paid and treat you like you the lowest thing on earth... They know who they are... Those been my unlucky situations... to the staff that really works with kids don't stop doing what you doing...

**-Running the Best Program**

**From The Beat:** All through life you'll find people who understand you and support you, allies, and those that don't and don't care to. Put your attention and energy into the people who give it back to you!

## Lucky

There's been several of situations I could of died, but I didn't. Also there has been times I could of got caught in any kind of way especially when you're living this crazy life...Orale pues I'm out

**-Traviesa**

**From The Beat:** Do you think you're lucky to have this chance to get yourself together, and make good plans for your future?

## A Good Program

What's up Beat, I'm up in challenge right now, I been up in here for a minute doing my time I'm tryna get this money and I been in here for hella long.

I been running a good program in here so it's all good I'm finna touchdown in June. I've been taking it one day at a time.

**-Mille**

**From The Beat:** When you were a little kid what did you want to be when you grew up? There are more job training programs now thanks to Obama. How would you like a 'green' job?

## Focused

Everyday I make sacrifices for my future. Before I would never even think about sacrificing anything. I was hard headed.

Now, I have to sacrifice my friends, thoughts, anger, lifestyle, and even living situation just so I can better myself.

I had to do this so I wouldn't go back to my old ways. The ultimate test is when I get out so I can see if I follow through with these sacrifices or if I go back to my old ways.

I have to stay focused or else I will end up in a bad situation again.

**-Hard Headed in the Past**

**From The Beat:** You do sound focused. What helps keep you motivated? What helps you stay focused? We think it will help you to keep what's really important to you in the front of your mind...

## Mi Vida Desde Niña

Cuando mi mamá se vino a US, yo era muy pequeña y apenas tenía unos cuantos años. Mi mamá me mandaba dinero para la comida, pero en tres meses que ella se había ido mi hermana más grande murió.

Mi familia no sintió nada por ella porque ella no vivió con nosotros.

Después un día un niño me ofreció droga y en ese tiempo yo tenía un apenas 11 años. Vivía en México. Lo acepté. Yo me sentía muy bien. Le seguí poniendo a la cocaína hasta que mi abuelita se dió cuenta y me mandó con mi mamá aquí. Mi madre le dijo a mi abuelita que no me quería aquí porque era muy peligroso por las pandillas.

Al año y medio, mi mamá le llamó a mi abuelita y le dijo que en dos meses me iba a mandar con ella y ahora estoy aquí.

Cuando tenía 12 y medio de edad, comencé a juntarme con pandilleros, pero no me traía nada bueno. Solo me la pasaba drogandome. Ahora tengo muchos problemas lo que yo nunca había querido. Ahora mi mamá me apoya y me da consejo sobre lo que tengo y no tengo que hacer. Ahora ya tengo 14 años y estoy mucho mejor con mi mamá.

**From The Beat:** Sentimos mucho lo de tu pérdida y también sentimos que desde pequeña edad hayas tenido que aguantar una vida sin control. Ahora las cosas ya han cambiado. Ahora ya tienes el apoyo de tu madre quien te aconseja y está dispuesta apoyarte en lo que seas. Es tiempo que tomes un nuevo rumbo en tu vida. Ahora ya eres toda una adolescente que necesita la vida normal de cualquier joven que se merece. Tienes toda una vida que disfrutar.

## Ever Since I Was A Little Girl

When my mom came to the US, I was very young, and I was a few years old. My mom would send me money for food. A few months after she left, my older sister died.

My family wasn't affected because she didn't live with us.

Later a kid offered me drugs and I accepted. Around that time, I was 11 years old. I was living in Mexico. I felt very good using it. I continued using cocaine until my grandmother found out about it and sent me to my mom. My mother told my grandmother that she didn't want me here because it was dangerous due to the gangs.

A year and a half later, my mom called my grandmother and told her that she was going to send me back to her in two months, but I came here.

When I was 12 and a half, I started to hang with gangsters but it didn't do anything good to me. I would spend my time getting high. Now I have a lot of problems I never wanted. Now my mom supports me and gives me advice about what I have to do and what I can't do. Now I am 14 years old and things with my mom are better.

**-Emilita, Marin**

**From The Beat:** We are sorry about your loss and we are also sorry for that uncontrollable life that you had. Now things have changed. Now you have the support of your mother who gives you advice and is willing to work with you to help you out. This is the time to take a new lead in your life. Now you are a youth who needs to get back the life a normal youth deserves. You have a whole life to enjoy.

*I started to hang with gangsters but it didn't do anything good to me.*

## Para Que Se Den Cuenta

Alguien preguntó que si los ricos se pueden poner los zapatos de los pobres. Claro que sí me gustaría para que se dieran cuenta como es ganar el pan de cada día porque los ricos malgastan el dinero. Cuando tienen mucho dinero, compran drogas mientras el pobre no tiene para comer. ¿Por qué en lugar de comprar drogas buscan como ayudar a los pobres para que tengamos un mejor futuro.

**From The Beat:** Tienes razón! Si fueras rico, cómo ayudarías a los pobres?

## So They Would Know

Someone asked if rich people would put themselves into the shoes of the poor. Well, I would like that so they can know how hard it is for us to gain the bread we eat when they waste their money. When they have a lot of money, they buy a lot of drugs while the poor don't have anything to eat. Why won't they help the poor instead of buying drugs?

**-Conejo, Marin**

**From The Beat:** You're right! But, if you were rich, how would you help the poor?

## Esa Foto

Las fotos se toman en fiestas, cumpleaños o cuando andas en un equipo de soccer. Las tomas para así tener un recuerdo de las cosas que pasastes bien.

En tu cumpleaños, te tomas fotos con todas las familias. En la fiestas, te tomas con tus amigos o con personas que más quieres que son buena onda contigo.

Cuando andas en un equipo de soccer, te tomas fotos cuando andas jugando o cuando ganas un trofeo.

Esas fotos tú las guardas porque pasastes un tiempo hermoso, compartistes muchas cosas y así tienes algo con que recordar lo de tu vida.

Hay veces que tu familia te toma fotos cuando estas chico y te empiezas a contar de tu niñez, el tiempo que pasaron felices contigo.

Por eso es bueno guardar tus fotos para tener recuerdo de tus pasado vivos.

**From The Beat:** Te agradecemos tus opiniones ciertas sobre las razones por las cuales nos tomamos fotos. ¿Dinos y tú tienes fotos de tu niñez? ¿Tienes fotos de algunos momentos bonitos en tu vida? ¿Deberías!

## That Picture

Pictures are taken in parties, birthdays or when being part of a soccer team. People take them to keep the memories of a good fun alive.

In your birthday, you take picture with your whole family. In parties, you take pictures with your friends or with people you care and who are good to you.

When you are part of a soccer team, you take pictures when you are playing or when you win a trophy. People save those picture because they spent a good time, shared good things, and you keep it to remind people of it.

There are times when your family takes picture of you when you are younger so they can tell you about your childhood and about the good time they spent with you. That's why it is a good thing to save your picture, so you can keep your past alive.

**-Pitufu, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** We thank you for your inputs on this topic about the exact reason why we take and keep pictures. Do you have picture of your childhood? Do you have picture of any happy moment of your life? You should!



*You get to realize that money doesn't give you health, love, peace in your heart or make you proud when knowing that you are spending money you stole from someone.*

## Sacrificandome Para Mi Futuro

Para empezar lo que debo cambiar es mi caracter y mi forma de ser. Al menos a mí no me detiene nada y simplemente no he querido. Ahora que cahí en la cárcel sí quiero cambiar. Cuando pienso en sacrificios que han hecho por mí es cuando estoy en mi cuarto y más en las noches.

La neta es que nunca me he sacrificado por ellos, pero quisiera probar que es lo que siente sacrificarse por alguien. Si les platicara lo que han hecho por mí, nunca acabaría de contarles y sería capaz de hacer todo por ellos.

Claro que nunca se van a poner los ricos en los zapatos de los pobres porque les costaría mucho.

Si los jueces pasaran el tiempo encarcelado que yo he pasado, pes apuesto que no durarían ni una hora por querer salirse.

Sí he conocido a una persona con suerte. El fue mi amigo quien fue mi maestro. El maestro salio y el alumno que soy yo le dieron un tiempo en la cárcel. El salió sin programa y sin nada.

**From The Beat:** ¿Sabes que nadie te detiene a cambiar, entonces porque no lo has intentado? ¿Qué es lo que estas esperando que pase contigo para que puedas cambiar? Deberias de buscar la forma como sacrificarte por aquellos quienes te quieren y darte una oportunidad de ser feliz en la vida. Alejate de las malas influencias que solo te metan en problemas. Aprende de tus errores.

## Sacrificing Myself For My Future

To start this off, what I need to change is my way of behaving and my attitude. Nobody is holding me back, but I just simply don't want to change. Now that I am in jail, I want to change. I think about the sacrifices people have done for me when at night when I'm in my room.

The truth is that I've never sacrificed anything for them, but I want to try what it is to make sacrifices. But if were to tell you about all the sacrifices people have done for me, I wouldn't have time to share it with you. But yes, I am able to do anything for them.

Of course that rich people would never put themselves in the shoes of the poor because it would be something hard for them to do. If judges were to spend some time I've served, they wouldn't handle it, not even one hour. They would want to get released.

Yes, I have met a person with good luck. He was my friend and my teacher. The teacher got out and the student got time in jail. I'm the student, and he is the teacher. He got out without program, and clean.

**-Chino, Santa Clara**  
**From The Beat:** If you know that nobody is holding you to change, why don't you try? What are you waiting to happen to you in order to make this change You should find the way to make sacrifices for those who care for you and give yourself the chance to live a better life. Stay away from bad influence that can get you into trouble, your teacher for instance.

## El Dinero No Lo Es Todo

Pues yo siempre había pensado que el dinero era la mejor manera de salir de problemas y salir adelante pero ubo un dia donde el dinero que ganaba, haciendoles un mal a la gente como robando, solo me sirvio para joderme más y para gastarlo en drogas.

Te das cuenta que el dinero no te da salud, amor, y paz en tu corazón mucho menos te sientes orgullo cuando sabes que estas gastando dinero mal habido que robaste de otra personas. O sea que el dinero no es todo en la vida.

Hay otras cosas más importantes al igual que estar bien con nuestro criador y todo Poderoso Dios, que nos deja ver cada nuevo día el amanecer con

nuestros propios ojos.

**From The Beat:** Estas en lo cierto el dinero mal habido. No te das cuenta que el dinero bien habido te pueda dar. Así como lo obtienes, de esa misma forma lo pierdes y hasta peormente. Solo date un vistazo a las cosas que ese dinero te ha llevado. ¿Alguna vez has ganado el dinero en buenas maneras?

## Money Is Not Everything

Well, I've always thought that money was the best way to get rid of problems and succeed, but one day that money I would get by hurting someone, was used to hurt me more and spent it drugs.

You get to realize that money doesn't give you health, love, peace in your heart or make you proud when knowing that you are spending money you stole from someone. In other words, money is not everything in life.

There are other things that are more important like being ok with our creator Almighty God, who let us see another day with our own eyes.

**-Armando, Alameda**

**From The Beat:** You're right about fast money. It doesn't give you the things that good money could provide. The same way you get it will be the same way you will waste it or even worse. Just take a look at what fast money has gotten you to. Have you ever gained money in the proper way?

## La Mujer De Mi Vida

Hoy me encuentro solo recordando a un amor que tube. Estoy recordando a una lindísima persona que ame, pero le tube que fallar una y otra vez. Despues de perderla, hoy me encuentro encerrado en la juvenile pensando en que voy a hacer cuando salga.

Pienso que la vida mía día tras día se consume sin poder ver a mi ex-novia, sin poder pedirle perdón por todo el daño que le hice.

En las noches me despierto con lágrimas en los ojos por no poder estar con ella.

**From The Beat:** Todavía no es tarde. Tendras la oportunidad de salir y tartar de ganarte el amor de tu amada. Si la amas, has la cosas bien para ti y ella. ¿Crees que puedas con eso?

## The Love Of My Life

I find myself thinking about a love I had. I am thinking about the person I love, but I had to fail her over and over again. After losing her, I find myself locked up in juvenile hall thinking about what I'm going to do when I get out. I feel that my life get is getting to its end day by day without being able to see my ex-girl and without being able to ask her to forgive me for the harm I caused.

At night, I wake up with tears in my eyes for not being with her.

**-Luis, Fresno**

**From The Beat:** It's not too late. You will have the chance to get out and try to gain the love of your life back. If you love her, do the right thing for you and for her. Can you do that?

## Los Dos Amores De Mi Vida

Pienso en que tal vez los únicos dos amores de mi vida se apartarían de mí. Són mi mamá y mi novia. Me duele el estar pensando que no puedo estar con ellas. M u y pronto tengo corte y tengo fe en que voy a salir de este lugar.

Si mi madre muere, me gustaría que en el entierro vaya alguien que la ame más que yo. Si mi novia me deja y se casara con otro me gustaría que se casara con alguien que la ame más que yo.

Solamente quiero que ellas busquen a alguien que las ame más que yo quien las ama como no tienen idea y que yo daría la vida por las dos.

A ti madre: Te doy las gracias, aunque estoy en este lugar, por darme todo tu amor, cariño, tus consejos, y tus abrazos. Gracias madre por traerme a este mundo gracias.

A ti mi amor: te doy las gracias porque contigo he aprendido a luchar en esta vida. Aunque estamos jóvenes, pienso en compartir toda mi vida contigo, y no importa lo que pague. Sea bueno o malo, yo siempre voy a estar a tu lado para ayudarte. Yo voy a ser mejor. Se los prometo! Las amo!

**From The Beat:** Que Linda dedicación! Se nota mucho que las quieres mucho y que estas dispuesto a dar lo que sea para que ellas sean felices. ¿Pero qué estas dispuesto a dar por ellas? Ya tu sabes que es lo que necesitan para que lo estén. ¿Cuales són los planes que tienes en mente para cumplir tu promesa? Te recomendamos que si vas a prometer algo, que siempre cumpla. Las promesas quebradas duelen más.

## The Two Love Of My Life

I think that maybe the two love of my life would leave me. They are my mom and my girl. It hurt me to think that I can't be with them. Very soon, I'm going to have court and I have faith that I'll get out.

If my mother dies, I would like someone who love her like I do to be over there. If my girl leaves me, and marries another person, I would like her to marry someone who can love her more than I do.

All I want for them is to find someone who can love them more than I do. I love them like you got no idea and I would give my life for them.'

For you mother: I thank you, even though I'm in this place, for giving me all your love, caress, advices and hugs. Thank you for bringing me to this world.

To you my love: I want to thank you because with you I've learned how it is to fight in life. Eventhough we are young, I'm seeking the chance to shary our lives together, and I don't care how much it will take. Good or bad, I will always by your side to help you. I'll be better. I promise! I love you!

-Alberto, Fresno

**From The Beat:** What a nice dedication. It's obvious how much you love them and are willing to give up for them to be happy? But, what are you willing to give up for them? You know what they need from you? What are your plans to keep your promise alive? We recommed you not to promise something that you can't keep. Broken promises can be more painful.

*The most beautiful thing I've gotten on Valentine's Day was being with my family. That's the best gift of all.*

The Beat Within

## Nadie Cambia De Un Dia A Otro

Hola a todos los compas. Pues nadie cambia de un día a otro. Yo les voy a contar algo. Yo no podría cambiar así porque todo se toma su tiempo. Por eso hay que pensar en las cosas cuando quieras algo.

Lo que quiero en mi futuro o cuando salga de aquí es empezar a continuar mi vida. Quiero dejar de andar con personas que no tiene nada en el futuro, y dejar de andar haciendo cosas que son malas. Ya no me quiero meter en problemas con otras personas como venganza.

Lo más bonito que me han regalado en un día de San Valentine fue estar con mi familia y convivir con ellos. Ese es el regalo que me han dado. No puedo estar con ellos porque estoy encerrado.

Muy pronto voy a estar con ellos. Ya mero me voy para estar con ellos. No tengo mas tiempo para contarles más.

**From The Beat:** Nos parece que tienes razón en dejar de juntarte con personas que no te convienen. Solo el hecho de estar con ellos te puedes meter en serios problemas. Busca como conocer amigos que tengan mejor chanza de futuro, personas que te puedan llevar un lugar mejor que este.

## Nobody Changed From One Day To Another One

Hi to all my friends. Nobody changed from one day to another. I'm going to share something. I couldn't change like this because everything takes time. That's why you have to think about things when you want something.

What I want for my future or when I get out from here is to continue my life. I want to stop being with people that don't have a future ahead of them and stop doing things that are bad. I don't want to get into trouble with other people like revenge.

The most beautiful things I've gotten in a Valentine's Day was being with my family. That's the best gift of all. I can't be with them because I am locked up.

Very soon, I will go with them. I'll leave soon to be with them. I don't have more time to say more.

-Paco, Santa Clara

**From The Beat:** It sounds good to us that you're thinking to stop hanging with people who are not for your convenience. Just to be with them, you can get into very serious problems like other have. Seek to meet people with a better chance of future, people that can lead you to a better place than this one.



## Perdoname Ama

Perdoname ama,  
no te quise lastimar  
me quisiste avisar  
no te pude escuchar  
me mandabas ala escuela  
me pintiaba con los homies  
en la casa de mi amigo me pasaba  
tome y tome le entrabamos a todo  
no teníamos perdón  
el jefe del barrio era mi homie  
el mas chingón  
Pero todo yaga al fin  
la lana se acabo  
quise ser un jale  
asaltar la licor  
No quise usar mi cuete  
pero mi homie se aselero  
le metio un cuentaso al chino  
y al piso se cayo,  
en medio del pedo  
no supe que pasó  
corri pal otro lado  
y la jura me alcanzó  
me dijo no "te muevas o te trueno aqui pelon"  
despues de ese día otra vida enpeso,  
cuando iba en la patruya  
pense en mi jefita  
ora si que la regue  
yo recuerdo que mi jefe me decía  
no hay ni pandilla  
ni homeboy que te saque de este ollo,  
Ahora encerrado  
el resto de mi vida sufriendo un gran dolor  
por fayarle ami jefita  
ya no sé que hacer  
mi vida está pérdida  
pagare las consecuencias  
ya no habrá salida,  
en la calle fui chingón  
pero aqui no valgo nada  
Soy un simple numero como otros camarandas  
aunque no fue mi culpa  
y no quise yo matar  
sí andas en pandilla  
lo mismo te va a pasar  
vas a estar encarselado  
pensando que hacer  
sí me hubiera yo quedado hacer el bien  
por eso yo les digo  
sigan.  
Buenos paisas hay que ser cumplidos, y sigan estudiantes.  
Destroce el corazón de mi madre la que medio su sangre,  
la que me dio a luz y me quitó el hambre y el sufrimiento  
que tengo mi vida.  
Perdoname ama. No te quise lastimar.

**From The Beat:** Esperamos que esta carta llegue a las manos de tu madre y sepa entenderte como lo hicimos. A veces cometemos errores que nos hacen pagar muchísimo de lo que nos imaginamos. Aunque tú no hayas hecho el crimen fuistes parte del crimen. Se llama conspiración. Esta experiencia te ayudará a entender bien tu situación. Esperamos que busques la forma como mantenerte con fuerzas para poder enfrentar las consecuencias de tus actos. La vida no se acaba aqui, sigue con tu cabeza en alto y lucha por salir de este lugar con seguridad.

## Forgive Me Mother

I didn't want to hurt you  
You wanted to warn me  
And I couldn't listen to you  
You would send me to school  
But I would hang with my homies instead  
I drank and drank, I would use anything  
We didn't show any mercy  
The boss of the 'hood was my homie  
The tightest  
But everything has its ending  
Money was spent  
I wanted to do a dirt  
To steal from a store  
I didn't want to use my gun  
But my homie got accelerated  
Shot the Chinese guy  
And he fell on the ground  
In the middle of the scene  
I didn't know what to do  
I ran to the other side  
and the police caught me  
and told me, "don't move or I'll kill you, bold headed"  
After that day, another life started  
When I was in the police car  
I thought about my mother  
This time, I messed up  
I remember my mom would tell me  
There isn't a gang  
Or a homeboy that can get you out of this hole  
Now I am locked up  
The rest of my life, suffering a big pain  
By failing my mother  
I don't know what to do  
My life has ended  
I'll pay the consequences  
There will never be an exit  
In the streets I was tight  
But I'm nothing here  
I am another simple number like other friends  
Even if it wasn't my fault  
If you're in gangs  
The same thing will happen  
You will be locked up  
Thinking what would I be doing  
If I had stay to do right  
That's wrote I say this to you.  
Well my friend you have to be reasonable and keep going  
to school. I destroyed my mother's heart, the one who gave  
me her blood, the one who gave light, the one who took  
away my hunger, and the sufferings I have in life. Forgive  
me mother. I didn't want to hurt you.

**-Lil' Joker, Fresno**

**From The Beat:** We hope this poem gets to her and take the time to understand you, like we have. Sometimes we make mistakes that make us pay so much that we can ever imagine. Even if you were not the one who pulled the trigger, you are part of the crime. We call the conspiracy. This experience should teach a lesson that will help you understand what things should not be done. We hope you find the strength that you will need to confront the consequences of your action. Your life doesn't end here, keep your head up and fight hard to get out of here safe.

*I destroyed my mother's heart, the one who gave me her blood, the one who gave light,  
the one who took away my hunger, and the sufferings I have in life.*

## The Cheapskate

I never really needed seeing glasses  
 Just always expected more from a vision  
 Come to find it empty  
 No matter how detailed you slice it  
 I still don't see the point  
 Vivid imagery only appeal to the soul blinded  
 Those who will only see beauty in light  
 Traveling at tip of the iceberg speeds  
 A dark side at every fathom  
 Along yet unimagined spectrums  
 A lump of coal has a long way to go  
 Before it becomes a diamond that is  
 Only forever because we've never  
 Cared to really go there  
 Just figured it would come to us.  
 I made for my girl a ring  
 From dried celery fibers  
 The only insurance that it needs  
 For life  
 Is that she never go too hungry.

## Mama Fortuna

Put the key in the ignition  
 Twist it in, hit switches  
 Let 'em spin while the world just stops  
 I move across the hills  
 And through the valleys in a mist  
 Na-na-na-na ya just missed me again  
 It ain't about nothing  
 I shall not want.  
 Oh, you didn't know  
 I've got ho's and homies in hell too  
 At times I do worry  
 And I wonder  
 What the devil a man  
 Like I must go through hoop after hoop  
 And every crack of your whip I just lick my lips  
 Why don't you think...  
 You've got it coming?

We would like to give a warm welcome to our next writer, Jacob, as this is his very first experience of The Beat Within. Jacob is a first time writer as he looks to submit his creative pieces of poetry and have them heard throughout The Beat Community. In these three very outstanding poems Jacob's writing goes above and beyond trying to get his message across. A first time writer, and a very skilled one at that, Jacob sends us his work from a Correctional Facility in Camp Hill, Pennsylvania.

## A Fully Grown Dog Playing Like A Puppy

See, my idea of anarchy is a  
 Compost heap on a concrete street  
 A non-profit economy so we  
 Wouldn't all be forced to become thieves  
 Ownership is the essence of order  
 A counterfeit clockwork at the  
 Expense of natural hierarchy  
 No longer a grazing herd or hunting pack  
 Humanity has abandoned its pride  
 We've colonized, becoming fully automated  
 Earth may have evolved apes from primates  
 But the origin of the intellect that  
 We are possessed by is alien insect  
 A parasitic species probably a decomposer  
 Carried on dominant genes of our weak  
 They unravel brain coils learning  
 To better exploit our appetitive selves  
 Procreating pale, ungainly beetle  
 Faces breeders that feast on the naïve and the meek  
 Who's humble indifference to desire is an inherent  
 Resistance to the controlling greed  
 But the difference has become apparent  
 And we are now targeted directly  
 Reluctantly subdividing our purity  
 And selling off bits of soul piecemeal  
 Just trying to remain under the radar  
 It starts with being, and knowing of the good  
 But wanting of, and becoming the evil  
 The will to choose is too alluded  
 To produce truth in self  
 So our curiosity creates a life of it's own  
 The lie-  
 From where we justify  
 Our daily labor  
 Biting the handoff the feeder.

*Humanity has abandoned its pride  
 We've colonized, becoming fully automated*

## Angels

As an angel came to visit me  
 At least that's how it seems,  
 We walked and talked about you  
 as we drifted through my dreams  
 In a moment full of happiness and a moment full of bliss  
 I handed her my love  
 for you in a form of a golden kiss  
 As she took it upon her finger tips  
 She promised me, she would visit you,  
 and placed it on your warm tender lips  
 This the only way I thought I could send my love to you  
 As they got me locked away  
 what is your man suppose to do?

## ROB SAN JOSE

Our next writer wants to share a short poem/dream that he recently wrote for all of us. We welcome Rob San Jose originally from San Jose, yet today finds himself in Deuel Vocational Institution in Tracy, CA. We thank Rob for expressing himself through this short poem.

*We walked and talked about you  
 as we drifted through my dreams  
 In a moment full of happiness  
 and a moment full of bliss*



## To The Beat Within

Probably every community in the world has needs and problems which could be met by the involvement of prisoners and juveniles of their near by institutions. Men and women who really need to experience the thrill of helping out. It is time now in our social development, to begin recognizing this natural pool of volunteers rather than trying to forget they exist.

This is something I'm addressing on how they are trying to "pass a law" that will (prohibit) prisoners, male and female from being put on pen pal web sites. This is being pushed forth by Polly Klass' father. I understand how he feels. I can't begin to express how much my heart goes to him in regards to his daughter. However myself, and many others strongly disagree.

Men and women in prisons, and jails, and juveniles have a "right" to be heard. To cut off outside communication is like saying "you're no longer human." Your feelings and emotions no longer matter.

A lot is learned by prisoners and juveniles when people reach out to find hope, and good in another. The fact that this is even being thought about is disturbing. For the only thing that will be accomplished would be to make prisoners, juveniles, etc, hate life and society. "I hope that people will see that the best things for these prisoner and juveniles is positive friendship and guidance."

It's time to let all the authorities know that prisons/ juvenile halls are part of the community. And to begin discussing ways prisoners/juveniles can contribute to the community life even while they are inside. We have to remember that every human being needs to feel useful, and therefore we need to present as many opportunities as possible for prisoners to experience their usefulness.

In this way the community becomes part of a person's (rehabilitation), which in all reality is really how it should be.

Many people feel though that things wont get better until we tear all the prison/juvenile halls down. I say that's cop-out. It is obviously going to be a very long time (if ever) before such profound changes take place. Meanwhile, hundreds of thousands of human beings live in prisons/ juvenile halls as they are, and we can begin making a "real" (change) in their lives without waiting for such major breakthroughs.

We must help prisoners and juveniles to change their feelings towards prisoners/juveniles. What better way to show how unnecessary the present system is.

Kindness towards prisoners isn't pity, and it's also not gullibility. Kind people have to lock people up, or refuse to let people out on bail or parole, or remove them even from

We would like to welcome back our next writer who is writing to us from The Main Detention Facility in Santa Rosa, CA. This week Carl Lee Houle graces the pages of our publication with some very helpful ideas on how to go about taking the prison system down. Carl does more than voice his opinions as he gives great ideas that these people (or whoever in charge may be) some consideration to what he's saying. So without further ado we present to you Carl and his latest essay on how to uplift our communities!

the mainstream prison population if they continue to be dangerous or act up. A great Indian sage once said. "Do what ever you must with people, but never shut anyone out of your heart."

Most prisoners and a lot of juvenile have been shut out of society's heart for a long time. Taking their only form of love, and guidance in communications is wrong, cruel, and un-usual. Many of them have never been in an environment or had a form of communication of kindness and encouragement. Many also have never experienced the satisfaction of helping out others. That is what it will take to make us safer from crime. I don't know whether our prison and juvenile halls will ever be empty. But I know that we could drop their receiving rate from 70% to 10% if we could drop out "out of sight, out of mind" attitude and focus some creative attention on the humanity of the people... all the men and women, adults, and juveniles that we lock up.

With this being known I continue to write my raps for my next c.d. And while doing so, I am studying (law) and many other areas of rights of juveniles and prisoners. I will continue to spend time as I do with my music, advocating human rights and political rights for all of you juveniles and prisoners. Doing this by publicizing various issues with regard to governments and multinational corporations violations against you all.

I thank my beautiful and wonderful woman, Cassandra Macias, for encouraging me to step up and be the leader I can be. My heart forever belongs to you (smile for me). And to our "Lil' Poppa," Dominic Macias. I love you as my own mijo and I'm always here for you. You also have helped me do what I am doing now for the people. I miss your smile and laughs and cant wait to play with you again. Much love to Vivian and Jessica Macias. Jessica the Mexican Paris Hilton. You all are great women and are in my prayers. I want the best for you and your families. You're beautiful and smart. You're possibilities to success are endless. Listen to your hearts.

And to all my brothers and sisters locked up in prisons and juvenile halls I will continue to be an "activist" for you all. With that, until pen dances on paper again next week. Take care Mr. Inocencio and I love you all at The Beat.

Cassandra Macias I love you with all my heart

Sincerely and respectfully submitted,

## Circumstances

People are always blaming  
 Their circumstances for what they are  
 I don't believe in circumstances  
 The people who get on in this world  
 Are the people who get up  
 and look for the circumstances they want  
 And if they can't find them, make them.

## BUGSY SIEGAL

The one and only Buggy Siegal has a short poem that he would like to share with everyone. He writes from a Correctional Facility in Lancaster, Ca.



## Ten Years After The Beat

It's a sunny Sunday afternoon. The birds outside are chirping away happily. It seems even they take a day off from the everyday hustle and bustle. I finally get around to organizing my house and I come across a box buried beneath a pile of old clothes. Peering inside the box, I immediately recognized the black and white pages of The Beat Within. Joy and pain churned too and fro as I flipped pages upon pages of pieces I had compiled over those dreadful years.

This was a special box. This box held my history, years of it tucked away so that one day I could reflect on my journey. Although I still have a long road to walk, looking at how far I've come just amazed me. I sat for about an hour reading over the pieces I wrote; some happy, some sad, most were filled with the ferocity of my youth embellished in anger and turmoil. God I was an angry kid.

This box held my life from the age of 12-18. I'm pushing 30 now and although it's been this long I will never

forget those walls...the banging on doors...the fights...the screams...the hate teeming inside....Man if I knew what it felt like to be almost 30 when I was at that point I would have done things different. I would have ruled the world or at least attempted. So my young friends let me be your crystal ball into the future, your time machine, your fortune-teller.

I used to pity myself. I cursed the gods for having a broken home and being poor. I never had this. I never had that. Why this why? Why that? Forget it. I'll be a gangster. I'll turn my heart into ice man. I was a little crybaby. That was me inside, but there was no way in hell you would ever see it. I had my thoughts trapped inside a place even I couldn't find. I thought I was invincible. I felt the world owed me my own show on MTV. Boy was I naïve. If you don't know the word then look it up because when you hit my age and you don't have more and more words people won't even look at you the same. Trust me.

Never GET STUCK BEING JUST ONE THING. YOU WILL REGRET IT. What I mean by that is "don't fall into a category. "Don't just be a thug because maybe the girls like it now, but they sure as hell don't like it at 30. They will just laugh at you and think you're immature. Lots of my friends never amounted to much. Not because they weren't smart or intelligent; it was because they were stuck with that mentality. They could only be one thing.

Who the hell stays a gangster when you start hitting my age? It's not cool anymore. By this time the whole group is either in jail or paralyzed or cracked out. Ya' get my drift. Try to do something for your family by doing something for yourself. Because if you don't know anything about anything neither will your kids, and I'll be the one to say that it's your fault. The difference between the rich and the poor is intelligence. That's it. Donald Trump was bankrupt and had lost everything during one point, yet he could come back from owing millions to making billions. He knew much more than the common man.

Read my friends. Read whatever. It doesn't matter as long as it interests you. And if you can't read then you better hurry the hell up and learn because the world is moving faster and faster. More people are getting born each day and you aren't just competing against Americans, nowadays, you're competing against the world. The thing about juvenile hall is that you might not think the judges and P.O.'s care about you and most likely they don't. Wait till you hit mainline Adult and you'll wish for the days in Juvie. I promise you. You don't know jack right now, lil' friends, and truthfully I don't even wanna waste my time telling you this but I feel like I owe it to the one thing that helped me get through Juvie.

I was in B5 San Francisco which is the max unit looking at 8 years at the Y. I had so many lockdowns they wouldn't even let me out of my room anymore. Having a solitary cell really battered my soul. I didn't know if I was alive or dreaming. Half the time I was losing my mind in a hurry. A guy named Josh

Our next writer in old friend of ours that we met a good decade plus ago, back when he was dwelling in the maximum security unit in B5 of San Francisco's Youth Guidance Center. 007 was one of the first writers to step out of the workshop boundaries and write epic pieces for The Beat Within. Even back then he was an outstanding writer who used to write about his street life and various topics that inspired others to take writing more seriously. Upon his sentence to CYA Alternative Glen Mills in Pennsylvania, 007 came to work for The Beat, and even for a spell use to assist with Beat workshops and editing! Now after a long drought and absence from our publication, agent 007 returns to give y'all probably the most important and realest advice someone his age can give you. Writing to us from his home in San Francisco, CA, here's 007 with a brilliant piece of work once again.

from The Beat would come by with the issue every week and I would see that

I wasn't the only one with a bad life and that people were surviving.

I snuck some pencils into my room. Broke them in half, pulled out the led, flushed the outer layer into the toilet and would write throughout the night, under the moonlight or fluorescent. It would just flow like it does now. Do whatever it takes to get into college and go to one far away from home. You need to take yourself outside on your city to actually reflect on who you are as a person. Just like writing in The Beat.

I used to catch myself writing gang affiliated messages of hate and crime glorifying the street life as if it was something to be proud of. I realize now that I wrote those things because that's all I had. That's all I could hold onto. I would write like I was a crazy demon, but inside, I would wonder why I had to prove myself. Writing is like a mirror into your soul. Sometimes at the tip of your pencil you can find yourself. It might not happen to most of you but I assure you that it's someone who can listen. I used to think of it as a news reporter really interested in what I had to say about my life. Getting back to the subject about your future I want you to know that every second counts.

Tick .....someone, somewhere just died.....Tick..... someone just had a baby....Tick.....you just got a second closer to where I am right now. You will get old whether you like it or not. No one prepared me for this. I'm still a little kid inside a grown man's body. It's like with every year that passes time just speeds up until I'm no longer here.

I once read a book called "The Art of Happiness" and it was probably the most influential book in my life. It changed my life, chapter by chapter, and page by page. The level of intelligence and profound philosophical tact I gained will be implemented throughout my life. Since you will probably forget to drop by the library and pick it up I'll give you a breakdown of what the book teaches.

BE HAPPY IN JAIL! Crazy? Am I insane?! Yes...Be Happy anywhere. Be an Optimist. Always look at what you have, not what you don't have. You know the old saying "is your glass half empty or half full." If you can remind yourself that every second of every day, you just figured out the secret of life. It's about being happy when you have absolutely nothing. You don't need anything, you don't want anything, you'll do fine with some payless shoes because you're humble. Most kids in the world can't even get a meal let alone Jordan's so stop being spoiled.

Everyone in America is spoiled -even the homeless, so get over your small trials and tribulations and do some good before you leave. I never knew it till now that I was blessed to be in jail for that long. To be put on that journey at such a young age I learned so much. I came out a man wiser than most and humbled for no man on earth knows much. Einstein knew the theory of relativity but could he race me on a motorcycle? I highly doubt it. Life is predestined to some degree. If you think you are completely in control just remember that you never chose to come here to this world. You were brought here. That alone should prove my point.

I'm Chinese so that already sets me up for a path I will follow. Just choose good not evil. And be nice to David Inocencio, he's my friend...or I'll jump-kick you!



# THE BEAT WITHIN

Our next writer is an intelligent young man that has just started his Internship for The Beat! He's a 17-year old young man that has already accomplished acquiring his GED and now wants to move on to bigger things like being active in the community by advocating for his elders. Coming all the way from Oakland, CA, please give Shawn a moment of your time as he tells us the important role his Grandma plays not only for him, but for everyone in the community!

## My Grandmother, A Member of the Community

My Grandmother lives in Oakland, California as a retired nurse from Arkansas. She raised five children of her own and four grandchildren. She's my great Grandmother and raised my mother when her own parents passed away in a tragic car accident. My mother didn't know her mother because she was four years old when she passed, but my great grandmother loved and cared for her. She is a sweet little woman who's involved in the neighborhood activities and church celebrations. She goes out of her way to help the youth in the community, by feeding them, taking them to school even sheltering them.

She's like a youth counselor in the community. She listens to your problems and tries her best to come up with a solution. You can ask people in her neighborhood about her and they'd tell you how wonderful she is and how much she has done for them. She has delivered babies in the community, fed homeless people, cleaned streets, and home schooled young children. She is an active force in the community, but due to sickness she isn't as active as before.

My Grandmother suffers from diabetes and arthritis; this slows her down from completing simple tasks around the house. People still love and respect her because she has supported a lot of people. She is the oldest person on her block and has lived there the longest so she is more of a positive figure in the neighborhood. If she hadn't been there babies wouldn't have been born, children would've missed school, people would've been homeless, and the community would've been even more violent.

I believe the mayor owes her a thank you because before she moved to the neighborhood the crime rate was very high but statistics show since she moved, the crime rate has come down about 37 percent in the last ten years. It was said that about 2 out of ten crimes in Oakland came out of the area she lives in. But now 1 out of 15 come out of the area. She is a strong figure to the neighborhood and people would be devastated to see her leave. Even the police call her to settle feuds in the community that symbolizes power and respect.

Due to this economy the government wants to shorten her social security and she cannot live without it. She has two options; to move away, or live with one of her children. I don't think that is fair at all, so I feel sorry for elders who have lost their other government funding. I realize that this is a huge issue for our elderly citizens, who haven't done anything to deserve this.

## My Great Grandmother...

Is a force that holds the family together and a role model and motherly figure. She is our history and an elder my family looks up to. Ms. Dorothy Smith provides for the hungry and homeless and people in the neighborhood have witnessed her accomplishments. Born and raised in Arkansas but moved to Oakland, CA, to raise her five children. When Ms. Smith was young she provided for the family and watched her children grow older, unfortunately her middle child Dorothy Davis died in a bicycle accident, which was my grandmother. She passed when my mother was four years old. So my great Grandmother Dorothy Smith raised her as her own child.

Ms. Smith, eventually, was infected with diabetes and arthritis, till this day she suffers from these conditions. Getting to the hospital has become a struggle for her because she doesn't have the transportation and the medicine have little effect on her. During this financial crisis she needs as much support as she can get, not to have her funding reduced. She has been some one I could look up to since birth and has played a tremendous role in the neighborhood. Anyone who knows her will literally vouch for her, she's sweet and compassionate and interested in helping people, which most grand parents are. Almost all her children are grown and have been successful in society.

She plays a big role in our family, without her we wouldn't be as close as we are now. My Grandmother does receive Medicare because she doesn't have the strength to go out and buy food, clothes and other necessities. So she knows the hassle of leaving the house and living with sickness in her body. She can feel the struggle of needing help and didn't receive it.

We don't really understand the burden Elders go through because we haven't felt it. There's two sides to this puzzle, life and awaiting death. These people like my grandmother deserve to be pampered because they pampered us as babies and our future lies between their wisdom. Youth problems can wait because without elders who will we possibly learn from. This generation needs Elders in the community to teach and reach the youth. Thank you Grandma for the support.

*These people like my grandmother deserve to be pampered because they pampered us as babies and our future lies between their wisdom.*

## Blackmind Intro

Beat: We're glad to have you back, Professor.

Blackmind: The pleasure is all mine.

Beat: We see you got some new pieces for us. Tell us about these pieces and what inspired you to write them?

Blackmind: Well, I've written four new pieces to honor and celebrate Black History Month. I had to continue what I started in The Beat issue 14.03.

Beat: How did it feel to see your "Black President" piece on the cover?

Blackmind: Wow. It was a very humbling experience. I've never felt anything like it. It was surreal, like I was reading someone else's work. It also shows that the Beat appreciates President Obama as much as I do. I love y'all for that.

Beat: Thanks. Change is good. Now to stay on subject, tell us about "Black Supremacist".

Blackmind: My definition of a Black Supremacist is a black person who treats other less fortunate blacks like they are inferior to them.

Beat: Have you met any Black Supremacists?

Blackmind: Unfortunately, I have and it's a sad sight to see.

Beat: How do you think other African-Americans will receive "Black Supremacist"?

Blackmind: Hopefully, they will read it out and understand my meaning. I'm not trying to diss our people. I wrote this piece to let people know that prejudice is not only between different races, it exists within the same race as well. This is not new, it's been going on for centuries, usually between the rich and poor.

Beat: Okay. Now tell us about your other new pieces.

Blackmind: Well, it's back to the basics. When I first started writing The Beat, I wrote pieces that the readers could relate to. I was writing solely for the readers and not so much myself. The Beat is bigger than me, it's about empowering the youth with a powerful message and words of encouragement. I wrote "Black Mayor", "Black Woman", and "Through These Black Eyes (Part Three)" strictly for the readers. I'm not writing any therapeutic autobiography pieces anymore. It's not all about Professor Black mind anymore. It's bigger than me and I want the youth to benefit from my writing.

Beat: That's great. Speaking of the youth, what kind of advise do you have for the record teenagers being sent to state prison with major time?

Blackmind: To all the incarcerated youth going through hard times, please keep your head up. Stay strong, and realize that you're life is not over. Listen to those who are wise, but do not trust anyone but God and yourself. Keep your eyes on the prize and do whatever it takes to get your freedom back. Educate yourself and use your knowledge to succeed in life. There is no future in a life of crime.

*To all the incarcerated youth going through hard times, please keep your head up. Stay strong, and realize that you're life is not over.*

Professor Blackmind is back with some more pieces of inspirational writing and empowerment. In his latest pieces Blackmind gives us some thoughtful pieces, which brings up some great points. Blackmind speaks from his heart with a lot of courage and authority. Tells us what "Black Supremacy" means, and dedicates all his pieces to Black History Month and History in itself as we stand back and watch our first African American President work towards change and a better America. Sending us his work from Folsom State Prison in Represa, CA, Professor Blackmind is back with some words to refreshing our own minds!

*What kind of world do we live in?  
 What makes you better than me?  
 We are both beautifully black  
 Or are you too blind to see?*

## Black Supremacist

What kind of world do we live in?

What makes you better than me?

We are both beautifully black

Or are you too blind to see?

So what I come from the projects

Who cares if you went to jail?

Our ancestors were slaves

They went through living hell

I know you grew up in the 'burbs

And I can't knock you for that

We have many white friends

But we will always be black

So take a second to think

About our similarities

You can't possibly believe

You're superior to me

Remember Dr. King

And the message that he preached

Or did your private school

Disregard what he taught

Even the white folks

Can't stand bigotry

So I ask you again

What makes you better than me?

'Cause I like BET

While you watch A&E

'Cause I eat collard greens

And you dine at cuisines

Okay, my clothes ain't new

And I got them from my brother

Everybody ain't rich

With a father or mother

So save the wrinkled up nose

Like you smell your own shhh

Blacks hating on blacks

That's a black supremacist

Blacks selling blacks dope

That's a black supremacist

Blacks killing blacks hopes

That's a black supremacist

Blacks shooting other blacks

That's a black supremacist

Blacks degrading other blacks

That's a black supremacist

If you hate your own people

You're a black supremacist

Don't forget where you came from

And why we exist.



## Black Mayor (Kevin Johnson)

My black brother  
 You have made history  
 Sacramento's first black mayor  
 You made it out of the slums  
 But never forgot where you came from  
 From college to the NBA  
 Scoring big for the Phoenix Suns  
 You made a name for yourself  
 And had a successful career  
 Retiring gracefully  
 You went back to your old neighborhood  
 Saddened by its condition  
 The teenage drug runners  
 On every block  
 The senseless murders  
 And violent gang wars  
 The youth had become endangered species  
 Products of the environment  
 Victims to the streets  
 Numbers in the system  
 You promised to make a change  
 And rebuild the community  
 And you didn't fail  
 Building youth centers  
 And new businesses  
 To increase employment  
 Restored old buildings  
 And created homes  
 For those with low-income  
 And shelters for those without homes  
 You stressed the importance of education  
 Repairing and restructuring our schools  
 My black brother  
 My black mayor  
 You have accomplished so much  
 And we are so proud of you for it  
 We believe in you  
 And we trust you with our city  
 In hopes that you will set an example  
 For other mayors in other cities  
 We supported you when they call you "baby Barack"  
 And continue to make a change  
 My black mayor.

## Black Woman

Hold your head up high my black sister  
 Even when this world leaves your heart blistered  
 Remember to love God and be loyal to your man  
 When times get rough give it all you can  
 Love your children and teach them to share  
 Shower them with tender and loving care  
 Respect yourself and your father's wishes  
 And cook your grandma's favorite dishes  
 Be independent and never rely on a man  
 Cause you can do for yourself whatever he can  
 Believe in you and the essence of your beauty  
 To love yourself in your duty  
 Don't be fooled by charm and good looks  
 Educate yourself and hit the books  
 Live your dreams and achieve your goals  
 Find what makes you feel whole  
 Say your prayers and pray for others  
 Be a good daughter, wife, and mother  
 Remember that true beauty comes from within  
 Break free from those who live in sin  
 Take care of your mind, body and spirit  
 Give good advise to those who'll hear it  
 Don't get obsessed with material things  
 And cherish the joys that life brings.

## Through these Black Eyes (Part Three)

The hatred  
 The pain  
 The oppression of my people  
 Forced into a life of slavery  
 Then freed  
 Just to be forced into modern day slavery  
 Praying that we could be freed  
 From these mental and physical chains  
 Beaten and thrown into this deadly pit  
 By the guards of the dungeon  
 Forced to scrub these toilets  
 And mop the blood from these floors  
 New slavery  
 Either work or go back into the pit  
 Where ghouls and goblins live  
 And feed off the souls  
 Of the living dead  
 But although the conditions are depressing  
 We remain strong  
 Building our resistance each day  
 Empowering each other  
 Through the strength of God  
 Sharing our love  
 And standing undivided  
 We will make it through anything  
 There is nothing that can break us  
 Nothing but ourselves  
 We destroyed slavery once  
 And we will destroy it again  
 We wont be denied  
 Our people is too strong  
 Freedom will come  
 This is what I see  
 Through these black eyes.



## Your Imagination

A source of vast infinite  
 Knowledge  
 Yet we fail to utilize it for the quest to better ourselves  
 Instead using it for selfish gratification and frivolous  
 desires  
 It has the answers to your unanswered questions...  
 Thoughts and ideas...  
 Without it mankind ceases to exist.



## The Blueprints To Greatness

To learn, grow and then put into practice your work, is a beautiful thing. The will to succeed is what should keep you motivated, unless misery and failure is something that you have welcomed to stay in your life. There is a way to overcome the obstacles in your way whether they be physical, mental or emotional, but you've got to be willing to work hard and achieve!

You have nothing but time on your hands to perfect your blueprints to greatness. Stop being fooled by the same old tricks/lies and take control of your future. We can't change the past but you can dictate your future! Knowledge is priceless, but to achieve it and put it to good use is what brings you true happiness. Build, grow, and strive to reach your dreams, goals, and aspirations.

Too much time is wasted on frivolous, unnecessary games and fantasies that you don't even believe yourself! Progress, perseverance and your potentials will bring you prosperity. So push for nothing less and surround yourself with people who can help you improve. Failure should never be an option.

Our friend Mr. Daniels stays delivering pieces that get us to know him a little bit better. In his upcoming pieces he does a great job on getting his messages across. His words paint a crystal clear picture of all the pain and strife that you'll feel when you lead a life through the criminal justice system. In his piece titled "The Blueprints To Greatness" Mr. Daniels drops some inspirational writing. Probably some of the realest game that you'll ever hear is found throughout that piece. Sending us his utmost respect from California Corrections Institute in Tehachapi, CA, we would like to return that respect by publishing his work!

## Then I Cry

Freedom taken  
 Life forsaken  
 Steel bars  
 Painful scars  
 Mental strains  
 Waist chains  
 Concrete walls  
 Collect calls  
 Nothings fair  
 No one cares  
 Mind games  
 Nick names  
 Count bells  
 Stairwells  
 Masked strangers  
 Constant danger  
 Jangling keys  
 Trembling knees  
 Lonely hours  
 Faith sours  
 Years wasted  
 Hope tasted  
 I question why?  
 Then I cry!

## Young Life

We should protect it by any means  
 It's our future  
 Yet we continue to let them become what we despise  
 And after there gone  
 We call them riders martyrs, lost souls, etc.  
 But if we truly love them  
 We would protect them from the bullshhh  
 While they are alive and with us!  
 Their life should be protected  
 To where silly shhh don't happen.

## Your Culture

It gives you history,  
 knowledge to fill that empty void that we call a soul.  
 We are people with no true identity.  
 And what you are taught in schools  
 is probably (one) percent truth and the rest fiction.  
 History class is really his-story!  
 So dig deeper than the surface  
 to find out who you truly are.  
 We've been through too much  
 to not be proud of whom we are:  
 Off springs of wars,  
 lost/confused, drugged, targets of genocide, etc.  
 Learn your true self.  
 It gives you something to be proud of...  
 something to stand for.



## My life Is A Cell (chapter 2)

I live in a bathroom. That pretty much sums up "home for the next 18 years, at the very least. I live in an 8 by 12 bathroom, with another man. Oh yeah, and our toilet has limited amount of flushes. When your forced to not only live in a very small space, for a very long time with someone, but also have to smell that person defecate, you either become really good fiends... or you learn to griffin' hate the guy.

I've been lucky in the fact that my last couple of cellies (roommates) have been really easy to get along with. Mostly because we shared the same values and had some sense of common courtesy. You learn to tolerate each other's faults- like how Bugsy forgets to flush the toilet after he takes a leak sometimes. Or how I'll cut some righteously nasty gas, but pretend to be asleep so I don't have to hear Bugs complain- and adapt to each other's program (daily routine). Good cellies are hard to find. So I was pretty happy when they threw me and Bugs in the same cell in the hole.

The hole sucks. Well, it does at first. You get none of your personal property, and are stripped down to the bare minimum: two pairs of socks, boxer shorts and t-shirts; one raggedy blanket, two sheets with various mystery stains, and two thick foam "mattress" that's supposed to make the slab of sheet metal they call a bed softer. You get one bar of lye soap, one small packet of bleach that is suppose to disinfect a toilet that looks like it might try to bite you if you attempt to crap in it; and tooth powder. Tooth powder tastes like chalk with less flavor. So, yes, the hole sucks at first. But, you adjust. You don't have much of a choice, really.

The system of "due process" is unique here. It goes something like this: A cop doesn't like your attitude so he throws a piece of trash in your cell through your door. You feel disrespected and mad, so you throw the trash back out. The cop steps in the way- on purpose- so the trash hits him. Boom! Assault on an officer! Loss of good time, a year in the SHU, you lose what little property you've amassed. Game over. I'm not exaggerating, though not every cop is crooked, just most of them. You're basically guilty 'till proven innocent. Beyond a reasonable doubt by another cop, who probably sees you as a lying sack of shhh, and it's usually your word against COs' (correctional officer), or like me; you get snitched on. God how I hate snitches!

Me and Bugsy are unique in that we didn't do what the "confidential informant" claimed. Which is to say, we did make, own, or know of any weapons in our cell. We had no clue they were there! Much like it is on the street, in a cell block, you can move to a new "neighborhood". Me and Bugsy moved to cell #116 to be near friends in the adjoining cells and area. Our little 'hood was coo! Everyone got along. People were respectful of each other and their space. No problems! We had just moved there a few months before we got caught up. And, as I said before, it all started when a child molester got his face sliced.

There are three main types of rats: Ones' who tells on you out

Ray Sanchez Jr. has been a part of our publication since damn near the beginning of time. Ray had made a name for himself through our pages as he has always submitted well thoughtout raps, that included a vast vocabulary of frivolous wordplay. But not only does Ray specialize in making his rhymes jump out these pages and into reality, he is also great in painting a picture about the realities and struggles one faces once they are trapped behind bars and face the realities of life in prison. Always coming through with some food for thought and great writing Ray sends us his masterpieces from Pleasant Valley State Prison in Coalinga, CA. Ray first started writing for The Beat when he was fighting for his life in San Mateo County Jail a number of years ago.

of jealousy. One who telstl in order to gain a favor with police. And ones' who tell on you to get their butts out of trouble. That day the ChoMo got cut, someone (or someones) got caught, and then all of a sudden, ISU (Investigative Services Unit) gets a snitch who can tell them where to find a pair of knives. The whole time this is going on, I'm just barely waking up to wipe the sleep out of my eyes.

They found the shanks behind a steel plate that houses the port for our TV cable and two electrical outlets. The plate is attached to the concrete wall with four security screws that require a special Allen wrench to loosen them. There is no way we could've known about those weapons. It's not as if you move into a new cell and decide to start ripping open light fixtures and electrical outlets. Somebody who had access to tools and previously lived there must've put them there. I really wish they would have taken them when they left. Inconsiderate bastards.

What got me screwed up is how the rat knew about the knives when I lived in that cell and had no clue. Us getting hit only after the slicing is pretty indicative that someone told to try and get out of trouble. Remember how I said due process is different here? Well, we don't get to face our accuser. It's kind of messed up when one man's lies had the ability to keep you from ever going home.

I got a 24 to life sentence and have to stay straight if I ever want to parole- and you can't even cross-examine him to prove your innocence. On top of the in-prison write-up that could screw your good-time/parole date, the DA could choose to press charges and add another case onto your sentence. So it's quite possible for you to end up like my junior prom date and get done more than once on the same night.

Prison food is crap. At least, it is here. We supplement our diet with products bought from the prison commissary/canteen. You get to go once a month at a specified time depending on the last two numbers of your prison I.D. numbers, one through thirty-three usually go to canteen the first whole week of the month, followed by the next thirty-three numbers, so forth and so on. My last two is eleven. Lucky me. Me and Bugs just ran out of food and I was about to go to canteen to get us some much needed coffee, Top Ramen soups, and various toiletries. But we hit the hole before this can happen. I miss canteen. So does Bugs. Second draw has already passed in the hole! Great. No food no deodorant. No toothpaste, soap or shampoo for another month. Maybe I ain't so lucky after all. Ah well.... Fudge it! At least I got a good celly.

## Nock This

I'm the liar's liar  
 Strung out like piano wire  
 Asbestos laced paper  
 Everything I write, is fire  
 Missing from the black pages  
 Hitta's in the back page us  
 Economic down-turn  
 Down you for my back wages  
 Tired of yo' false truths  
 You frontin' like you's false tooths  
 Constantly bump yo' gums,  
 'bout nothin' in the sound booth  
 The Beat Within  
 The Beat Without my mouth is nothin' coo', dude  
 An instrumental patient,  
 loosing patience with yo' foul moves

I'm the king of my castle  
 My vassals move at my call  
 Checkmate, wit' check shredders  
 You should check yo' vest y'all  
 Not like it's gonna do nuthin'  
 You just runnin' with it showin'  
 Telling where, not to hit, when you wear it in the open  
 Chasing after what's fashionable  
 You get smashed in yo' mandable  
 My baby girl, Nina, eat yo' face like she cannibal  
 Accountable fo' animal's  
 Who could snuff ya' like a candle, brah  
 You wearing that bandana like the color doesn't matter,  
 brah  
 Making light of our dark times, the chalk lines, that  
 outline  
 Our fallen fellow factors  
 Aren't for you to use and get shine.

Who the hell stays a gangster when you start hitting my age? It's not cool anymore. By this time the whole group is either in jail or paralyzed or cracked out. Ya' get my drift. Try to do something for your family by doing something for yourself. Because if you don't know anything about anything neither will your kids, and I'll be the one to say that it's your fault. The difference between the rich and the poor is intelligence. That's it. Donald Trump was bankrupt and had lost everything during one point, yet he could come back from owing millions to making billions. He knew much more than the common man.

[read the rest of 007's BWO piece on page 62](#)

